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FRIENDS IN COUNCIL



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL II

‘ It is good, in *Discourse*, and Speech of Conversation, to vary,
‘ and intermingle Speech of the present Occasion with Argu-
‘ ments; Tales with Reasons: Asking of Questions, with Tell-
‘ ing of Opinions; and Jest with Earnest: For it is a dull
‘ Thing to Tire, and as we say now, to Jade, anything too far.’

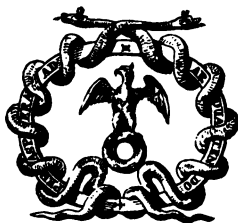
BACON: *Essay of Discourse*.

Friends in Council

A Series of Readings

And Discourse

Thereon



London

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1854

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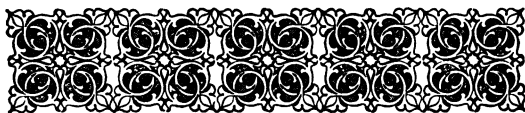
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FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

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BOOK II. (CONTINUED.)





CHAPTER I.

WE had found our former reading on the downs so pleasant, that we resolved to wander forth again for our next; and when the day came, as I had by this time recovered my usual health, Milverton proposed that we should go to a mill at no great distance, called Bender's Mill, and have our reading on a knoll which overlooked the issuing waters. Ellesmere had come down the previous evening, and Lucy and I joined the party at breakfast, so that we were ready early to set out on our excursion. As we went along through the close lanes near Worth Ashton, I happened to remark the beauty of the hedges there.

MILVERTON. Yes, replied Milverton, I think that the hedges are amongst the most beautiful

things we have in the country. Look at that mixture of hazel and maple; what a variety of form and colour! And then the clustering clematis, like garlands thrown over the rest. See, too, the more delicate underwood of the hedge, the fern here and there, the wild strawberry, the fox-glove and all the other things we do not know the names of, but which some Linnæus, (would we had one here!) could talk to us for hours about. I have often thought that, taken altogether, such a hedge as this is a picture of human life—beautiful and complete in its bold variety, whereas men would have one sturdy quickset of the same height and colour—both in their fellow-men and in their hedges.

ELLESMERE. Now we are off upon our similitudes. I thought it soon would be so. My dear fellow, cannot you look at a bit of nature and enjoy it for itself, without troubling yourself about resemblances, and bringing in men on all occasions?

MILVERTON. I do not look out for resemblances: they at once occur to me. No wall rises up before me between the beautiful in inanimate nature and in the ways of men. You must take me as I am.

ELLESMERE. Well, I must not be particular

then : I *will* take you as you are ; only come and sit down on this stile. You country people all walk so furiously. May we say, without offence, that the walking part of the human body is that which receives the most culture in the country ? Not, of course, that I mean in the most distant way to insinuate that—

DUNSFORD. Oh no, certainly not—pray do not go any further in the sentence. We know the respect you have for our intellects.

LUCY. Do you know, Mr. Milverton, that poor Carter is dead ? He died last week.

MILVERTON. What, my poor old friend who lived in that cottage there, and with whom I have had many a long talk about the crops and the weather. Ah me ! he was not a very wise man ; yet, now, perhaps, he knows much more than the wisest of us who are left. I have often thought, Dunsford, when any of those whom we consider common-place people die—how at once they come in our minds to be regarded as superior beings. They know so much more than they did, we think ; they look down upon us, as we fancy ; they could tell us so much. Great is our reverence for the dead.

I ought to have known there was something the matter with the old man, not seeing him

this fine day at his accustomed place in the porch.

LUCY. Don't you feel sometimes, Mr. Milverton, when there is a very very fine day like this, as if something were going to happen—something quite unforeseen and very joyous—out of the common way, you know?

ELLESMERE. As Milverton is silent, Miss Daylmer, I will answer for him. We are getting into the middle-aged and full-coloured, if not into the 'sere and yellow,' leaf; and are not given to the transports which belong to hopeful young buds and blossoms. When it is a fine warm day like this, we rejoice—that it is not cold.

MILVERTON. Do not believe him, Lucy, we are not quite so prosaic, yet.

ELLESMERE. Do look at that little shepherd boy staring at us. Depend upon it, our coming here is *the* event of the day to him.

MILVERTON. I wonder how those urchins get through the hours.

ELLESMERE. Dinner, though but bread and cheese, must be the great pivot for their thoughts to turn upon. Now, it is so many hours to dinner. That is a fact which may be dwelt upon. Then dinner comes. After that, there

is a sort of rush of the thoughts into space : for as yet supper is not on the horizon. Then strange images are sought out in the scudding clouds ; dim recollections of a mother or a play-mate lost young succeed, or, perhaps—but we will not go on imagining ; let us try what we can make out of our young friend there, and see what he does think of.

DUNSFORD. Here, my boy.

ELLESMERE. Your dogs and ours seem to agree very well, my little man.

SHEPHERD'S BOY. Yees : they knaowed one another afore.

ELLESMERE. What a fine day it is for you to-day.

SHEPHERD'S BOY. Yees.

ELLESMERE. But I suppose, whether it is fine or not, you are out all day long with the sheep.

SHEPHERD'S BOY. Yees.

ELLESMERE. Heus, amici, multo magis arduum est colloqui cum rusticis, quam argutis quæstionibus veritatem e testibus non volentibus extorquere !

DUNSFORD. Testibus non volentibus !

ELLESMERE. Oh, never mind the Latin. But let us proceed. And do you like the sum-

mer days better than the winter days, my little fellow ?

SHEPHERD'S BOY. They be warmer.

ELLESMERE. And how do you get through the days ?

SHEPHERD'S BOY. I doant know.

ELLESMERE. I dare say, you find them sometimes very long.

SHEPHERD'S BOY. Noa. Johnny Hewsome do come up most afternoons to see I.

ELLESMERE. Humph ! Is Johnny Hewsome a bigger boy than you ?

SHEPHERD'S BOY. Noa.—We be much of the same soize.

ELLESMERE. Well, you can buy something with this for you and Johnny Hewsome to play with. Good bye.

We then walked on, leaving the boy pulling vigorously at his hair.

ELLESMERE. 'Johnny Hewsome do come up most afternoons to see I.' There lies the savour of life to our young friend. Without it, all would be 'lees,' as Macbeth would say. Well, it is very beautiful to see the friendship of these little animals. I think there is more friendship at that time of life than at any other. They are

then evenly-formed creatures, like bricks, which can be laid close to one another. The grown-up man is like a fortress, angular-shaped, with a moat round it, standing alone.

LUCY. Who is it that is now involved in metaphors?

ELLESMERE. I suppose all of us have, at one time or other, had a huge longing after friendship. If one could get it, it would be much safer than that other thing.

MILVERTON. Well; I wonder whether love, for I imagine you mean love, was ever so described before, 'that other thing!'

ELLESMERE. When the world was younger, perhaps there was more of this friendship. David and Jonathan! How does their friendship begin? I know it is very beautiful; but I have forgotten the words. Dunsford will tell us.

DUNSFORD. 'And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

'And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.'

ELLESMERE. Now that men are more com-

plex, they would require so much. For instance, if I were to have a friend, he must be an uncommunicative man; that limits me to about thirteen or fourteen people in the world. It is only with a man of perfect reticence that you can speak completely without reserve. We talk together far more openly than most people; but there is skilful fencing even in our talk. We are not inclined to say the whole of what we think.

MILVERTON. What I should need in a friend would be a certain breadth of nature; I have no sympathy with people who can disturb themselves about small things, who crave the world's good opinion, are anxious to prove themselves always in the right, can be immersed in personal talk or devoted to self-advancement, who seem to have grown up entirely from the *earth*, whereas even the plants draw most of their sustenance from the air of heaven.

ELLESMERE. That is a high flight: I am not prepared to say all that. I do not object to a little earthiness. What I should fear in friendship, is the comment and interference and tale-bearing I often see connected with it.

MILVERTON. That does not particularly belong to friendship, but comes under the general head of injudicious comment on the part of

those who live with us. Divines often remind us, that, in forming our ideas of the government of Providence, we should recollect that we see only a fragment. The same observation, in its degree, is true too, as regards human conduct. We see a little bit here and there, and assume the nature of the whole. Even a very silly man's actions are often more to the purpose than his friends' comments upon them.

ELLESMERE. True. Then I should not like to have a man for a friend who would bind me down to be consistent, who would form a minute theory of me which was not to be contradicted.

MILVERTON. If he loved you as his own soul, and his soul were knit with yours, to use the words of Scripture, he would not demand this consistency, because each man must know and feel his own immeasurable vacillation and inconsistency, and if he had complete sympathy with another, he would not be greatly surprised or vexed at that other's inconsistencies.

DUNSFORD. There always seems to me a want of tenderness in what are called friendships in the present day. Now, for instance, I don't understand a man ridiculing his friend. The joking of intimates often appears to me coarse

and harsh. You will laugh at this in me, and think it rather effeminate, I am afraid.

MILVERTON. No; I do not. I think there may be a great deal of jocose raillery pass between intimates without the requisite tenderness being infringed upon. If my friend had been in a painful and ludicrous position (such as when Cardinal Balue in full dress is run away with on horseback, which Scott comments upon as one of a class of situations combining 'pain, peril, and absurdity') I would not remind him of it. Why should I bring back a disagreeable impression to his mind? Besides, it would be more painful than ludicrous to me. I should enter into his feelings rather than into those of the ordinary spectator.

DUNSFORD. I am glad we are of the same mind in this.

MILVERTON. I have also a notion that even in the common friendships of the world, we should be very staunch defenders of our absent friends. Supposing that our friend's character or conduct is justly attacked in our hearing upon some point, we should be careful to let the light and worth of the rest of his character in upon the company, so that they should go away with something of the impression that we have of

him: instead of suffering them to dwell only upon this fault or foible that was commented upon, which was as nothing against him in our hearts, mere fringe to the character, which we were accustomed to, and rather liked than otherwise, if the truth must be told.

ELLESMERE. I declare we have made out amongst us an essay on friendship, without the fuss of writing one. I always told you our talk was better than your writing, Milverton. Now we only want a beginning and ending to this peripatetic essay. What would you say to this as a beginning: it is to be a stately, pompous plunge into the subject, after the Milverton fashion. 'Friendship and the Phoenix, taking into due account the Fire-Office of that name, have been found upon the earth in not unsimilar abundance.' I flatter myself that 'not unsimilar abundance' is eminently Milvertonian.

MILVERTON. Now observe, Dunsford, you were speaking some time ago about the joking of intimates being frequently unkind. This is just an instance to the contrary. Ellesmere, who is not a bad fellow, at least not so bad as he seems, knows that he can say anything he pleases about my style of writing without much annoying me. I am not very vulnerable on

these points : but all the while there is a titillating pleasure to him in being all but impertinent and vexatious to a friend. And he enjoys that. So do I.

ELLESMERE. I vow it is very spiteful of you, Milverton, to be showing Dunsford that there is less spite in me than he imagined ; wearing me about you like a tame serpent with the poison taken out of him. I wont be made out so amiable. I shall not admit that I didn't know that I could not tease you upon these subjects.

With pleasant talk of this kind, we reached our destination, the mill ; and after seating ourselves on the grassy hillock near it, Milverton read the following essay.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE RURAL POOR.

COMING out from the crowded city and looking upon some snug sequestered village, amid sweet smells and cheerful sounds, and with the thought of all that poets have written about the country, you feel confident that something very pleasant might be made out of the life of the poorest cottagers you see around you. If, however, in the recesses of your mind there lurk

statistics of various kinds, parliamentary reports, evidence before health commissioners, accounts of education, and records of crime,—various misgivings will come upon you and combat with the pleasing impression which the aspect of nature has involuntarily inspired you with. Nor will your second thought be entirely wrong. The life of the rural poor is unquestionably very meagre, mostly very dirty, and oscillating between dulness and low joys. Such being the case, it is not a matter of the first importance to ascertain whether the rural poor are better or worse off than they used to be formerly. It is very difficult to say whether relatively to the rest of society they have improved or receded: but at any rate there are great room and great need for improvement now.

Before saying anything about the improvement of the peasantry, it may be well to say something about the nature of the peasantry themselves. I conceive that the English rustic is greatly under-rated. My own experience is only of the peasantry in the southern counties (those of the northern are thought by many to be much superior) but from what little I have seen, I have certainly formed a very favourable

opinion of the possibilities arising from the character of our rural poor. It is true, there is often an appearance of stolidity about them, especially amongst the men, but this is only an outer crust of insensibility, an induration which nature kindly creates to harden them for what is too frequently a very hard lot. Their occupation, as Adam Smith observes, is better calculated than that of the mechanic to cultivate the intellectual powers. The changing seasons, the variety in the state of the materials upon which the rustic has to work, the many objects he has to accomplish, all tend to make him a more intelligent and thoughtful man than one whose labours are confined to the perfection of a single mechanical process. If the rustic then is inferior to the mechanic, this inferiority must result from other circumstances than the difference in their respective callings.

Various plans and theories have at different times been put forward for the improvement of the labouring population; and occasionally we hear of some specific cause and specific remedy which will account for and settle all the difficulty. Of late years (for there is a fashion in these things) theories about population built upon the shal-

lowest and most shifting basis of facts, have been brought in as the main guide of our conduct towards the labouring population. It is a bold thing to say, but I believe that as much folly has been uttered by so-called political economy as ever has been said against it. And still more folly and cruelty have been worked into practice by men who, enslaved to some one doctrine, true enough in itself but requiring when expressed in life a thousand modifications, have carried it out as if it were a Bible to them. They have made a creed of it. Now scarcely any doctrine in morality will bear to be so treated, much less any conclusion of political economy. For example, you will find what are called shrewd people declaring that wages are now the sole bond between master and man. Whereas one man cannot be ten minutes with another without taking up some position in regard to him not influenced by the money values which may pass between them.

Questions connected with the theories of population and the means of putting a stop to its too rapid increase, are very large and require to be discussed in much detail. I cannot do so here, and do not intend to do so anywhere, but shall simply and somewhat dogmatically declare my

own opinion, that no great state was ever saved or re-habilitated by invalid measures such as direct anti-population ones. New forms of thought, new arrangements of society, inventions, discoveries and unforeseen conjunctions of circumstances give new opportunities for national energy, and carry off, or undermine, an evil which will never be pared down by cold and merely restrictive measures, and which perhaps ought never to be attacked directly but indirectly.

I do not myself hope anything either from Fourierism, Owenism, or any of the forms of association which have hitherto been proposed. These societies attempt something upon prudential motives which could only be carried out upon the highest motives. They will all fail, I think, for want of a religious bond; and no religious bond can be formed for such second-rate objects as an increase of warmth and food, and a decrease of labour. Added to which, these projectors ignore all individuality, and would have men to be more alike than they will ever find them. But there is more difference in the roots of the earth, even in the forms of any basket-full of potatoes you dig up, than there should be in the people who would be fit to inhabit the parallelo-

grams and Icarias which are with a kind fancy laid out for them by sundry benevolent projectors. Still, I do not mean to say that no benefits may arise from the principle, or rather the practice, of association being carried out as regards many of the minor purposes of life.

The modes which occur to me for raising the condition of the rural labouring classes are of a much simpler and humbler kind than those alluded to above. Where reform for the labourers may most securely be looked for, is first in themselves, secondly in their immediate employers, thirdly in their landlords and resident gentry and clergy, fourthly in what the state can do for them by means of education.

First in themselves. De Foe says that the English are 'the most lazy diligent nation in the world,'* and what he says on this head goes to

* 'We are the most lazy diligent nation in the world there is nothing more frequent than for an Englishman to work till he has got his pocket full of money, and then go and be idle, or perhaps drunk, till it is all gone, and perhaps himself in debt; and ask him in his cups what he intends? he'll tell you honestly, he'll drink as long as it lasts, and then go to work for more. I make no difficulty to promise, on a short summons, to produce above a thousand families

the root of the matter. My own conviction is, that throughout England every year there is sufficient wages given, even at the present low rate, to make the condition of the labouring poor quite different from what it is. But then these wages must be well spent. I do not mean to contend that the poor could of themselves alone effect this change; but were they seconded by the advice, the instruction, and the aid (not given in money, or only in money lent to produce the current interest of the day) of the classes above them—the rest the poor might accomplish for themselves. And indeed all that the rich could do to elevate the poor could hardly equal the advantage that would be gained by the poor for themselves, if they could thoroughly subdue that one vice of drunkenness—the most wasteful of all the vices.

In the living of the poor (as indeed of all of us) there are two things to be considered: how to get money and how to spend it. Now I be-

in England, within my particular knowledge, who go in rags, and their children wanting bread, whose fathers can earn their 15s. to 25s. a week, but will not work; who have work enough, but are too idle to seek after it, and hardly vouchsafe to earn anything but bare subsistence, and spending-money for themselves.' Quoted in EDEN's *State of the Poor*, vol. i. page 260.

lieve the experience of employers will bear me out in saying, that it is frequently found that the man with twenty shillings a week does not live more comfortably, or save more, than the man with fourteen shillings, the families of the two men being the same in number and general circumstances. It is probable that unless he have a good deal of prudence and thought, the man who gets at all more than the average of his class, does not know what to do with it, or only finds in it a means superior to that which his fellows possess of satisfying his appetite for drinking.

This brings me to the second part of the subject, namely, what their employers and superiors can do for the poor. First I begin with the moral aim they should have before them, which is, to make helpful, hopeful, wise men around them. For this end, the rich and powerful must ever beware of that charity which breeds poverty and helplessness. Thoughtless benevolence may for awhile create some show of good; but it begins to fade away at the retiring footsteps of the so-called benefactor.

There was a maxim uttered before a parliamentary committee by a very shrewd man, who had been himself, I believe, one of the

labouring classes—'Charity creates much of the misery it relieves, but does not relieve all the misery it creates.' The object of the higher classes and indeed of all employers should be to keep their efforts for the poor free from any of the objections to which foolish charity* is liable,—to make their charity something reproductive; and in no way can they insure this object so well as by operating almost insensibly and imperceptibly, if it may be so, upon the characters of those whom they would benefit. The education of the young is a sure and pre-eminently reproductive charity; but it would be hard to limit our efforts to this pleasant duty,

* I have been asked to explain what I mean by 'foolish charity.' To do so in detail would require a volume. But I may say briefly that that charity will generally prove foolish which lacks thought and continuity of purpose. It is only in romances that giants of evil are cleaved from head to foot by one blow. In real life evil has an elastic force, and recovers from rare or long intermitted blows, however hard or well-directed. To be sure of being wisely charitable, you must begin by giving a great deal of thought—a generosity of the rarest kind. Then, besides giving thought, you have to continue steady in purpose when the novelty of the purpose has worn off. Even working wrongly in this way leads to some good result: something at last is learnt which might never have been attained by scattered efforts at mischief.

and much besides in the condition of the poor requires to be attended to.

Now, suppose that a benevolent and sensible man of the class of employers were, with the above views in his mind, to resolve to see if he could not make the poor about him spend their spare time and spare money well. What would he do? The first thing he would attempt, would be to improve their moral and intellectual culture. He would try to give them more information on economical subjects in which they are at present deplorably ignorant. He would endeavour to pre-occupy their minds against low temptations by giving them something else to think of. His gifts would all tend in the same direction: he would aim at their being of the reproductive kind.

In this class of benefits that which holds by far the first place is house accommodation. I have no doubt that ever since the change of manners which the ending of slavery and feudalism gave rise to, the want of house accommodation for the poor has been their greatest drawback and deficiency. The complaint of a want of cottages is no new one. Eden, writing fifty years ago, thus expresses himself on this point: 'the present is said to be an age of specu-

lation, and particularly so in building; but adventurers in this line, I believe, seldom think of erecting cottages in country parishes, on the contingent possibility of letting them to labourers' families. Neither can labourers themselves, who wish to migrate from their parents, and set up for themselves, although they may possess the small sum requisite to erect a cottage, always obtain permission of the lord of a manor to build one on a common. I am acquainted with one parish, in the neighbourhood of a populous city, in which, from the difficulty of procuring tenements, or small plots of land to build on, poor people have, more than once, availed themselves of a long night, to rear a hovel on the road side, or on the common.' And in the present day things are worse rather than better in this respect. Now the wastefulness of bad accommodation can hardly be overrated. Dampness, uncleanness, want of means for storing and preserving food, and insufficient sewerage in a habitation, are all immediate causes of pecuniary loss. But the indirect losses are here the greatest. Who can estimate how much money is spent for the enjoyment of the clean sanded floor and comparative comfort of the pot-house which might be had so cheaply at home? In

improving the house accommodation of the poor, you spend something which anticipates expense; and do good which cannot well be taken away. Wages are said to vary according to the price of sustenance, according to the demand for labour, according to the increase of population. It may not be in your power, except indirectly, to affect these great currents of human prosperity and adversity; but raise the style of house accommodation and you will do a solid good which lowering of wages cannot depress.

To proceed still further in the same direction. I have spoken hitherto of house accommodation being wanted for the poor, but such accommodation will be very incomplete, unless it includes a bit of ground surrounding each cottage. Well would it be if every land-owner carried in his mind a resolve in consonance with an Act passed I believe in Elizabeth's reign, which forbade cottages to be erected unless a certain quantity of land were laid to each cottage, and denominated all cottages failing in this respect 'silly cottages.' I do not presume to say what would be the quantity of land (for that must vary according to the productiveness and other circumstances of the vicinity) which should be enough to give the cottager a homestead, and prevent

him from becoming a cottier,—where it is thought desirable to prevent that.

But that he should have a homestead I have no manner of doubt. Consider the loss of labour, if round every home there is not a homestead. Allotments, excellent things as they are, will not compensate for the want of a homestead, especially in such a climate as our British one, where, on account of the wet, it is desirable that the ground which a man labours upon at odd times should be close to him. Consider also the benefit of getting all manner of little adjuncts to his ordinary food, which even a little homestead affords the labourer. In furtherance of this, direct gifts may be made by the neighbouring rich, which gifts will be eminently re-productive ones, such as plants, seeds, tools, animals.

In an essay published about half a century ago on the best means of providing employment for the people, there are three maxims laid down which seem very judicious. The writer contends ‘that, in order that any advantage may be derived from the desire of enjoying the artificial necessities of life, and the imitative propensities of man, by making them the means of rendering him industrious, three circumstances are mate-

rially requisite. The example to be imitated must be pretty generally diffused among a people. The object it proposes, must be considerably above those already enjoyed; and, to acquire it, although labour and industry should be necessary, they should never be vain and ineffectual.* Now all these conditions would soon be fulfilled were several employers and rich men to set about improving the house accommodation of the rural poor, because the third condition would be fulfilled without their interference if only there were a sufficient proportion of good cottages, as the industrious men amongst the poor would find their way to them.

Having considered the benefits that would arise from better house accommodation, and from homesteads, I would say that the views of a benevolent landlord might go still further in the same course, and he might endeavour to make some at least of the poor people on his lands proprietors. The cottier system in Ireland has naturally frightened large proprietors and the public generally, and made them very averse to

* See DR. CRUMPE's Essay referred to in EDEN's *State of the Poor*, vol. i. p. 438.

small tenancies in land or small proprietors. But the cases are not the least analogous. Almost every good result in life is the result of proportion; and it is so in the case we are considering. That people having very small holdings in land should succeed, requires certain qualities in the men themselves, and certain circumstances around them. If there be an utter absence, or something approaching to it, of one of these qualities or circumstances, the whole proportion is deranged, and what might have been an unmixed good turns out an unmixed evil. We are not to conclude against small holdings of land in a country abounding in manufacturing industry, under settled laws and very firm bonds of society, and amongst a people not easily contented and very likely to be willing at any time to give a good day's work for a good day's wages, because these small holdings have led to great abuses and mischief in a country where the above named advantages are wanting, or do not exist in the same degree. The Celt is very fond of setting up as gentleman. The graces as well as the faults of his character tend that way. But I have no fear that amongst our Anglo Saxon community the possession of one, two, three, or even five acres of land will

make a man indifferent to putting himself forward whenever good wages are to be had for work.

To give our labouring population comfortable house accommodation, to provide them some small homestead round each cottage, indeed, to go further, and to make several of them small proprietors, are works which will require much time, but they should be at once adopted as objects for all land-owners and employers as they already are by some; and a man who coming to an estate where a number of peasants are lodged in 'silly' and dirty cottages, which almost deny the idea of Prudence (rarely willing to enter abodes where her elder sister Cleanliness is never to be found) and who leaves a number of wise and clean cottages, all of them with little homesteads round them, and some with small pieces of land attached to them rented, or even possessed, by the cottager, will have done a greater feat than many a man who has been a most skilful architect of his own fortunes, and has made a great noise in the world.

I am not sure that such conduct on the part of the land-owner or employer will repay him in money, and I do not believe that that is what he will think first of. Why such things are not

attempted now by landlords, is from a fear of bad consequences to the community and not altogether from selfish motives. They have the fear of increased Poor Rates before their eyes and look with some apprehension upon each cottage as a possible nest of paupers. And as things are now, this fear is not to be wondered at; but I believe if the condition of the peasantry were elevated, so would be the value of the landlord's estate; and every acre of his would become more valuable as there arose a more numerous but self-sustaining population. It is only in this way—by an improvement in the condition of the labouring classes—that we shall diminish the pressure of the Poor Laws, or make them what they should be—a kind refuge for those amongst the poor whom very adverse circumstances, old age, or accidents, have driven to utter want.

Lastly, there is what the state can do for the rural poor by means of education: furthering and consolidating private efforts in this good cause, and giving it its just weight and honour. It is not to be supposed that education, which is a spiritual thing, will at once compensate for material deficiencies; but it tends to breed up a

generation who will make the most of whatever material good comes in their way, who are likely to bear evil days with patience, (for patience is a great part of education) who will know that there have been other evil days in times past, who will appreciate the difficulties which others experience in assisting them, who will stay in their parishes or emigrate, or marry, or live singly, upon better grounds of reason and more thoughtfulness than their fathers were able to command; and who, if the education were made what it ought to be, would have increased their acquaintance with nature in various ways, and thereby added to their resources in many directions.

DUNSFORD. I think it would be a great thing for the rural poor and the country generally, if the farmers were a more educated race.

MILVERTON. Certainly, and if they were men of more capital. I often wonder that the younger sons of gentlemen are not more frequently brought up to the cultivation of land.

ELLESMERE. That comes from the diseased idea prevalent among the higher and middle classes of the charms and glories of professional life. Now I do not wish to run down any

thing by which I make my bread, but I can imagine a great many ways of occupation more fitting for the mind, the body, and the whole man, than that of a lawyer. I mean of a successful lawyer, for nothing can be conceived more dreary than the life of a man who is waiting for business through the best years of his existence.

MILVERTON. Yes, if you were to relate to the inhabitant of another planet the career of many of our cleverest men, it would seem strangely disproportionate. For the first five and twenty years they are elaborately educated. For the next fifteen or twenty they wait to do something, and for the remainder of their lives they find out that there is nothing for them to do, or even if they do get into business, what a poor superstructure it is, considering the ample base of time and labour upon which it has been raised.

DUNSFORD. Forgive me, Milverton, but this is rather a shallow way of looking at the question. Every man's life here is a very poor superstructure for the basis. Indeed I should say no superstructure at all, but only a foundation. However, without going into these general questions, I quite agree with you that the

higher and middle classes have been too anxious to take their children out of all employments which have anything mechanical in them. To go to another point connected with the essay: You have said little or nothing about the social intercourse between the landlord and the labourer.

MILVERTON. I have said so much upon this subject in other places, that I feel as if it would be only needless repetition to say any more. As you know, I look upon the social intercourse of various classes as one of the great means of education for each class; and there is no doubt that the aid and encouragement which the higher might give the lower classes by mere presence among them, and converse with them, is very great. Often, all that a man wants in order to accomplish something that it is good for him to do, is the encouragement of another man's sympathy. What Bacon says the voice of the man is to the dog—the encouragement of a higher nature—each man can in a lesser degree afford his neighbour: for a man receives the suggestions of another mind with somewhat of the respect and courtesy with which he would greet a higher nature. Do not you remember, Ellesmere, when, in our younger days, you went through any pro-

blem of which you felt assured that every step was built upon the clearest reasoning, you yet felt a great satisfaction if any fellow-worker had come to the same result?

ELLESMERE. I very seldom did come to the same results with any body else; but if I had, I allow I should have felt more sure that I was right.

MILVERTON. And this in matters of the clearest logic; whereas all human affairs are immersed in the confusions, contradictions, and darkness of material things.

DUNSFORD. To come back again to the essay: you have said nothing about Emigration.

MILVERTON. Why should I? It may, or may not, be requisite; but at present I am endeavouring to show what can be done on our own soil.

ELLESMERE. One of the greatest things for furthering your rural improvement would be an improvement in the law which should lead to a simpler and less expensive mode of transferring small portions of landed property.

DUNSFORD. And one of the greatest moral improvements which would conduce to the rural improvements we have been considering, would be a lessening of that vanity which induces men

to hold large estates in their hands which they have not capital to work or to improve.

MILVERTON. Yes, so that they are like vessels which turn out to be too large for the docks they are built in, lying idle in unwieldy pomp.

ELLESMERE. Well, let us leave rustics and rustical affairs for to-day. There is no doubt that what Dunsford has just said is very true; and I should have no objection to extend his moral proposition, and declare that if men in general were wiser and better, corn would grow much richer; but meanwhile let us look at the water coming from the mill. How beautiful it is! It can say, too, in defence of its noise and tumult, that at least it grinds some corn, an excuse which many kings and governors, authors and clamorous persons of various kinds cannot plead for their doings—which are often all noise; and the corn is not ground by them, but trodden down.

MILVERTON. I was thinking when we first came to the waters, of a Spanish proverb about them. ‘*Aguas pasadas no muelen molino.*’ ‘The waters that have passed the mill grind no more.’ It is a proverb against excessive regret, a very good one.

DUNSFORD. The two thoughts occasioned by

the same phenomenon are very characteristic of the men.

LUCY. I wonder when any thing in nature will give occasion to Mr. Ellesmere to say anything good-natured of man.

MILVERTON. No, no, now you are not just to him. Ellesmere only means to take the part which some man occupies in one of those brilliant little novels, *Headlong Hall*, or *Crotchet Castle*, 'the deteriorationist.' What I wish is, that he would give us all that is to be said in this character at once, and then turn to some other, which he would fill as well.

ELLESMERE. Commend me to Milverton for a friend to give a high view of one's intentions and purposes. But I have no objection, if you really wish it, to comply with your request some day, and give you a lecture containing my general dissatisfaction with most things.

DUNSFORD. Now, now, nothing like time present: and a practised lawyer like you can speak without any preparation.

ELLESMERE. Wait a minute. I will just walk up and down a bit to arrange my thoughts, and invent some telling aphorism to begin with. You must not interrupt much. You see where the sun is now: it will be there, far in the

west, before I shall have finished, if you interrupt. Upon my word I am serious, I will give you a speech if you like. You must all answer it, if you can, in your various ways. Milverton will write an essay in reply—the title, ‘on the completeness of modern life;’ my friend to the right (meaning me) will preach a sermon which somebody who hears will perhaps be good enough to tell me about; and Miss Daylmer will—make an answer in worsted-work.

He went away, walked about a little, and then returning to us, began as follows:—

ELLESMERE. The age that is, would, indeed, be the weakest as well as the last of ages, if having the whole story to tell, it did not make itself the hero of the story. In this case, however, having (much to my satisfaction) to appear at present on the other side, I shall lay before your Lordships—and her Ladyship—such reasons as may induce the Court to come to a very different conclusion to that of the Court below. To begin with the Church.

DUNSFORD. Now, Ellesmere—

ELLESMERE. My Lord, I must beg you to bear in mind that there is an imaginary Bar here as well as a Bench, and that the right of

free speaking to the point—here you must fancy a murmur of applause to the back of the speaker—is not to be questioned, and so I shall proceed. What a thing a modern Protestant service is, a mixture of services which, however beautiful in themselves, (the product by the way of other and very different ages) were never meant to be so brought, I would say jammed together as they are; hymns of praise are made inappropriate, and at times almost ludicrous, by being read out instead of sung: the noble buildings of the church are so misused, that an author, who might be eminent if he would listen more to a certain learned friend of his says (here I am pretty sure of one of my judges going with me) ‘cathedrals are to him mostly a sad sight’—and yet this church is, in its way one of the choicest things of the land.

Then, as to the state, here is a constitution working in such a fashion, that there is no man however weak, unprincipled, or ludicrous, who may not fairly pretend to a seat in the chief council of the state; and where the government of the country, interest-subdued, is at times so feeble and so inadequate, that, hopelessly, it allows those evils to go on which all men acknowledge to be evils, without attempt at avert-

ing them (look at the rail-road legislation of late years for that) and where, generally, measures, instead of being wisely and long prepared, are left to be originated by some chance,—by individual knowledge and impulses,—to be borne on by clamour and carried by combination from without. The honours of the state, to whom are they given? often to men industriously obscure, of whom, though they may have supported the Whig or the Tory interest in this borough or that county, the country in general knows nothing, and ought to know nothing.

Then, if we come to literature, (which is to be the government always of the next age) what do we find but histories with insufficient research, fictions without truth, no metaphysics, no theology, and such a multitude of bad hurried books issuing from the press, that the art of forgetting is the main desideratum for a modern reader of modern books. If we look at the social life, dulness, ostentation and imitativeness reign triumphant there. Here is a metropolis numerous as the army of Xerxes, (even in the annals of an historian not bound to provide for them) and which if a Xerxes could look down upon, piercing through the pall of smoke which

covers its inhabitants and which they like to have about them, he would see them clustering together in ill-built, ill-ventilated, ill-placed houses, the social pleasures of the people tarnished by vice, encumbered by foolish ostentation, formed without art, partaken without comfort, and having no soul of pleasure in them. He would see this multitude dressed all alike, not suitably to what they have to do or to suffer, but in a dress adopted from the defects, the follies and the fancies of the most foolish of mankind. An author whom I have before alluded to, and from whom better things might have been hoped, exalts to the uttermost the fact, if it be so, of this age being free from fear of the faggot or the torture-chamber. Fear of the social circle, fear of the newspaper, fear of being odd, fear of what may be thought by people who never did think, still greater fear of what somebody may say—are not these things a clinging dress of torture?

There are noble men in the world, but they do not say to each other, 'Brother, I am in doubt, in difficulty, in despair: come and tell me what thy soul thinketh.' A mean and cowardly reserve upon the most important questions of

human life, is the characteristic of modern times. In few words, to parody the saying of a great writer in depreciation of an age, perhaps, superior to this, we may say that we are living amongst second-hand arts, misguiding letters, bad society—and, which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of the meanest aspects of public opinion; and the life of man gregarious, unsociable, whirling, confused, thoughtless, dull.

MILVERTON. You have shown your skill as an advocate; here enlisting Dunsford with you when you spoke of politics after his fashion; here making sure of me in commenting on the poverty of modern worship and the mean and stupid arrangements of some modern cities.

DUNSFORD. But you do not mean to say, Milverton, that you agree with his ill-natured tirade?


MILVERTON. Why—I think he is right to some extent in nearly every point of attack he makes; but it does not discompose my mind. It would be a very sad thing if we had not a great deal left for us to do in the world. In these matters I hold to one view which I have expressed to you metaphorically before. It is, that the progress of mankind is like the incom-

ing of the tide, which, for any given moment, is almost as much of a retreat as an advance, but still the tide moves on.

Again, to look at the matter practically, the man who is satisfied with any given state of things that we are likely to see on earth, must have a creeping imagination: on the other hand, he who is oppressed by the evils around him so as to stand gaping at them in horror, has a feeble will and a want of practical power, and allows his fancy to come in, like too much wavering light upon his work, so that he does not see to go on with it.

A man of sagacity, while he apprehends a great deal of the evil around him, resolves what part of it he will be blind to for the present, in order to deal best with what he has in hand: and as to men of any genius, they are not imprisoned or rendered partial even by their own experience of evil, much less are their attacks upon it paralysed by their full consciousness of its large presence.

ELLESMERE. Had I really been a hired advocate, I should have ventured to interrupt your Lordship a good many times in the course of the last few minutes, and remind you of the question at issue: only when you are in the aphoristic vein, and putting forth all manner of theories,]



do not like to stop you. Now that last thing you said is plausible, nay more, it is a high view of genius, but I should be glad if you would inform me of your examples, if you would tell me who are the people who are not subdued by their own experience.

MILVERTON. All very great artists; Shakespeare and Goethe for instance—even Scott in a minor degree, whereas Byron was absorbed by his own experience of life.


DUNSFORD. But to descend into details with our answer to his speech, or rather our judgment upon it.

MILVERTON. First as regards the church—you must answer that though, Dunsford.

DUNSFORD. No: it was a common-place, weak attack which might be improved into something serious, if I were to answer it—more especially as I agree with him in some measure about the services.

ELLESMERE. This is the answer.

MILVERTON. I suppose you will leave it to me to say something in reply to his attack upon present literature, in which I really think, Ellesmere, if you were not wholly joking, you were very unreasonable. We look across the wide landscape of time, from this height near us to



that one in the middle distance, from that to the next tall trees, from them to the next circle of hills, and so on; forming our view out of the heights, and not knowing that there are such things as deep valleys and wide-extended plains before us. I have heard one of the few persons qualified to judge in such matters say, that in all time there are not more than a hundred names eminent in literature. That age would be the most wonderful age the world had seen, in which it was not to be said of the current literature, that the greatest part of what was written had better not have been written, for any service that it could do a reasonable reader, taking into account the hinderance that it is to him in preventing him from reading what has some undoubted nutriment in it.

Neither do I mean to contend, that there is not a certain reckless fluency in these times and a grasping at effect at no little sacrifice of truth; but there is some sterling work done, surely. We are not in a position to say whether this work is to live or not, and to weigh its merits nicely.

ELLESMERE. Now then, Miss Daylmer, the question of dress and social life is left for you. Are we not very far removed by our arts of

dressing and general demeanour from any of the lower animals, especially the ape species?

LUCY. I don't know what branch of our toilet, or rather of yours you would begin reforming. I suppose you would not begin by being an ancient Briton and wearing a long beard.

ELLESMERE. Indeed but I would. That is the very first thing I would do.

LUCY. Frightful! what figures you would be!

ELLESMERE. How can you talk such nonsense. You have generally more outward seemings of sense than most country girls, but in this you are as absurd as—as I am to try and convince you. Have you ever examined pictures, busts, or coins, and seen what men used to look like? So wedded is the feminine nature to what it is accustomed to, that I am persuaded that if it were customary to have the right hand thumbs of all people in the upper classes cut off, the women would all vow that it was an elegant custom; and when some Ellesmere had proposed to keep the digit in question, some Miss Daylmer would wonder how he could think of doing so vulgar a thing—so unbecoming too.

MILVERTON. Well, I think we do waste a good deal of time and energy to make ourselves ridiculous in the matter of beards.

LUCY. But is nobody with me: Uncle, what do you say?

DUNSFORD. I cannot see, my love, why, in itself, any costume would not become a clergyman, which so many old divines (have you ever noticed their portraits in my folios) look well in.

LUCY. I see you are all for beards; but then, if it would not be presumptuous in a girl like me to say so to such reverend company, are you not rather cowardly in not doing what you all think would save you so much trouble, and be so becoming?

DUNSFORD. What would be thought of it, dear Lucy, in the parish? As it is, your mother often tells me that she is sure Mrs. Thompson will say that I do things like no other person.

LUCY. And you, Mr. Milverton?

MILVERTON. Why you see, my pet, I say a great many things in books which are not perhaps quite according to rule, and which I know the potent Mrs. Thompson would pronounce against: and then I do a few odd things, to please myself and have my way, and I cannot afford to do any more. Each of us has a certain amount of allowable eccentricity: (some more than others) I have no savings, and have in-

deed rather overdrawn than otherwise. Besides, authors, artists, players, are all an outcast race: my doing it would not further the matter: some very respectable, judicious, safe man must set the example.

LUCY. I turn then to Mr. Ellesmere.

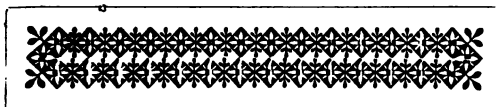
ELLESMERE. Why you see, Miss Daylmer, I am a lawyer, and we lawyers love to cherish custom; if we were to upset that, we do not exactly see what would happen. It might be that people would come to omit giving us the customary fees. Nevertheless, some day after a long vacation spent in the East, I am not sure that I shall not appear in Court with a beard. You may be quite sure I shall not do this till I have secured what is called a competency.

LUCY. Valorous gentleman! Well, if we women had not the courage in such trifling matters as those of dress to do—

ELLESMERE. Now, Miss Daylmer, don't tempt me to say what I shall be sorry to have said, as you hear angry people exclaim, when they are about to say the obnoxious saying; but I am credibly informed, and do verily believe, that there are certain portions of women's dress—

Here Lucy tripped away, for she is a girl of great tact, though I say it who shouldn't say it, merely observing that she would return when Mr. Ellesmere had come back to some subject which he really did understand something about. This broke up our sitting; we now noticed that it was time to think of returning, and commenced our walk homewards.





CHAPTER V.

THE following chapter, as my readers will soon see, is out of its proper place. But, wishing to keep the different sections of one important subject together, I give the following essay a place here, though it was read to us at a subsequent period and when we were far away from Worth Ashton.

I remember only a part of the conversation which preceded this essay. Milverton was talking about fables; and Ellesmere said, that he believed the animals made fables about us, and that he did not see why such fables should not afford just as good hints for their conduct as our fables about them for ours. Milverton assented to this; and said, that he knew indeed of one occasion when a fable related in the presence of certain animals led to very important results. If we liked, he would tell us the whole story. We said we should be glad to hear it, and Milverton thus began.

MILVERTON. The lions once were lazy: and some of them whose teeth were not so white as they had been, but who roared as bravely as ever, said to the others, 'Why, brother lions, do we lead this wretched toilsome life—up early, to lair late; hunting alone over the sandy plains from morning till night, and earning but a scanty living or too much; now starved, now gorged; and at all times some of us starving while others are gorging. Let us no more be unsociable, but let all the great beasts of the forest hunt together in packs; so shall our cares be divided equally, and our prey the same.' The other lions roared assent. The tigers also listened favourably to this counsel, and all the young ones much approved it, for though they loved blood, they were fond of play too.

The project once agreed upon, the jackals were discarded; the wild beasts gathered together in bands; and a new order of things reigned throughout the forests and deserts of the world.

But plenty and harmony reigned not. When any of these vast companies of wild beasts went out to hunt, their united roaring, like the thunder, warned their prey from afar of what was coming; and every one of the harmless

animals had time to hide. Then too none of the great beasts cared, as before, to watch with diligence the traces of his prey, for that was a duty which belonged to all. Nor was that amity found which should have graced such noble assemblages of great wild beasts; for those amongst them whose limbs were strongest, or whose scent was keenest, would insist upon being foremost in leading the pack, though they would not be earliest in snuffing the morning breeze, or in tracing the faint footmarks of young antelopes.

Each week the lions and tigers grew more gaunt, and their lionesses and tigresses more clamorous for food for their cubs and themselves. *They* had never been so fond of this banding together.

At last one sultry day, in the plains of Central Africa, there met by chance five companies of these great beasts. That they should thus meet together showed how ill they had managed, and what a want there was of jackals. None of them had tasted water for two days, for it had been the duty of every one to look out for the bubbling springs in the few green oases.

There they lay couched upon the sand, each

company eying the others with ill-suppressed hatred; but the hunger which had increased their ferocity had tamed their courage, and they feared to attack one another though they thirsted for each other's blood. Low growlings occasionally broke the silence. Unconsciously, in their irritation, their tails swept slightly backwards and forwards and raised a fine cloud of sand which only parched their palates more.

Then one of the old lions, whose mild roaring was never listened to by his tribe except in seasons of great adversity, essayed to speak; and all the rest were silent. 'Brother beasts,' said he, 'let me tell you a fable of men. Those poor, weaving, spinning, handy creatures were once minded to live most socially together. The food they scratch for, the rags they tie themselves up in, were to be in common; their little dens were all to be large ones; none were to seek private ends, but each was to scratch the ground or draw the little threads across each other with all his might for the good of the community. Their jackals too were all dismissed; and men began their new way of life, uttering their discordant noises of joy.

'But somehow or other the scratching of the

earth for the public good was not so deep as it had formerly been. More weeds than seeds came up. The rags men tie themselves in were more scanty than before. It was found that there never were so many sick men who could not scratch the earth or tease the threads. But there was one kind of work which all would do, and that was, to tell the others what to do. These deformed creatures who stand upright and hate one another, hated more than ever, each wishing to scratch the ground in the foremost rank, or to weave the first threads that were to be woven. Their females, like ours, my friends, are more given to call for food for their cubs, than to plan hunts and battles, and talk wisdom.' Here a low but significant growl burst from the assembly, each remembering what his lioness or tigress had lately said to him at bedtime in his lair.

'My friends, to end a story which is already too long, I have but to tell you that these creatures soon came to blows with stick and stone. The strength of tooth and nail has not been allowed them, for fear such irritable animals should make too frequent use of that power. The earth was no longer scratched at all, the threads no longer interwoven, their dens tumbled

down, the white sand gained upon the green grass; and that we are here, brother beasts, to-day, is owing to the folly which led these noxious, though in themselves weak, creatures to attempt a sociability which they at any rate were not good enough for.'

He ceased. The lions, whose modesty is equal to their valour, felt in their hearts that they too were not good enough. Silently and with depressed mane and tail each sought out his discarded jackal and resumed his old haunts. Those that survived grew fat again; and they have never since attempted to be so extremely sociable together.

After we had laughed and joked a good deal about this strange fable of Milverton's, he read to us the following essay upon Government.

GOVERNMENT.

THE political events of 1848 may be said to have arrested the attention of the civilized world; for such persons as were not themselves concerned in these events, have been constrained, as it were, by their swiftness, their suddenness,

and their magnitude, to give some heed to them. Like persons in the street, when a frightened or wild animal rushes by, all pause from their work, or their amusement, or their thought, to look with eager eyes for what accident will happen next. Those amongst ourselves who during long years of peace, had taken but a languid interest in foreign affairs, have lately been ardent in their study of the current history of the day.

It is impossible but that many thoughts of an unusual kind respecting government, must have occupied men's minds in the course of this eventful year. It is unlikely that any thoughtful person will not occasionally have given anxious consideration to the government of his own country.

The first thing that will have occurred to any attentive observer of late events will be a suspicion of considerable deficiency in wisdom on the part of those governments which have shown themselves so unstable. But we may go much further than the present occasion, to demonstrate the deficiencies of modern government. Long ago, Gibbon noticed that all the men employed in the army and navy of Imperial Rome were not equal to the number maintained in modern

times by the Prince of one province of that Empire. The historian alludes to Louis the Fourteenth. What a condemnation of the modern system this fact affords. It may be said that the population of Europe is much increased since the times of the Roman dominion ; but then Rome had to keep in order the known world. There was to be an army always encamped upon the Rhine and another on the Danube. In Africa, in Spain, in Asia Minor, in Britain, soldiers judiciously placed maintained the public tranquillity. There were of necessity two or three stations for the Roman fleets : and Rome herself had always a large body of her tyrant pretorians encamped beside her. The united numbers of all these troops do not amount to the number maintained by France of late years in a time of European and domestic peace. Going still further in our researches, I think if any one attentively considers what notices we have of the well-being of ancient cities, suspicions will cross his mind whether our advance in material prosperity has been what it ought to have been. No doubt this slowness of advance merely arises from a new set of difficulties having grown up which require new sagacity to meet them.

But the truth is, that government is now, and always has been, a matter of profound difficulty: and in all ages has been conducted in an abrupt and convulsive manner. Grievances which if early dealt with might be dealt with easily, are suffered to harden and increase at leisure. Indirect remedies (which will some day be found out to be in general the best remedies) are seldom sought for. What is done is too frequently the offspring of clamour and chance: and legislation is mostly provided at a crisis.

History is chiefly a record of the failures of Government. This is the usual current of human affairs: it does not become any of us to complain inordinately of it, or to pride ourselves upon discerning it. But we may strive to lessen an evil which will not be eradicated as long as men are men.

Turning now to our own government, we cannot but see that we have great advantages; and at this moment are looking on at the disturbances of the world with conscious superiority. We have, as I said, great advantages. The advantage of our insular position can hardly be overrated. Then the nature of the people. They are resolute, enduring, grave, modest,

humorous. I lay great stress upon the last of these qualifications. Nothing corrects theories better than this sense of humour which we have in a greater degree than is to be met with, I believe, in any other people. An Englishman sees easily the absurdity which lurks in any extreme proposition.

Moreover, there is such a thing as fortune, or as I would rather say, divine guidance, for nations as for individuals. That man must be very unsubmissive, I think, and very unobservant, who has not noticed in his own career turning points and important crises which could hardly be said in any way to have been brought about by him or to be results of his character. The same with us as a nation: we have had our disturbances at the right times, upon great subjects, and conducted by great personages. From us was to be the greatest colonization: and it seems as if we had been trained up with a view to that, accustomed early to independent action, as people who would have to seek their fortune in the world. Now these considerations, far from puffing us up with pride, ought to make us fearful for ourselves and also kind in our judgment of other nations. We may remember, in estimating other nations, that the character of

a people, as of an individual, may be greater than its history would convey: and, perhaps, the utmost we can say of our government, supposing it to have been pre-eminent amongst modern governments, would be some speech of a similar form, though much more gracious in substance, to that which Talleyrand uttered with regard to our public school education,* 'It is the best,' he said, 'which I have ever seen, and it is abominable:' so we of our government may say, It is the best we know of, and there are a good many things to be mended even in it.

In discussing the subject of Government generally, it may be divided into three heads: the form of government, the objects of government, and the mode and means of government.

I. FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

This is a very difficult subject to consider, and it is almost impossible to pronounce what form is abstractedly the best. Much must depend upon the nature of the people, their history, their age as a people, the nature of surrounding

* C'est la meilleure que je n'ai jamais vue, et c'est abominable.

governments (a thing often overlooked) and the geography and products of their country.

To take an instance as regards the nature of the people in its bearing upon a question of government often mooted theoretically and practically in modern times ; namely, whether there should be one or two legislative bodies in a state. There may be a people of such sober temperament, so given to pause and ponder, so careful in the choice of representatives, and so thoroughly versed in political questions and economical knowledge, that they might do well with one legislative body : and wise measures might be carried by acclamation. Not that such a people would be very apt to acclaim, or that being very thoughtful they would be likely to be often unanimous. But if they were, one might safely trust their acclamations ; and in this way that people might escape the doubt, the delay and the expense which belong to a second chamber, and they might do well without long deliberations of any kind. I have never myself seen, heard, or read of, such a people ; but there may be, or there may come to be, such a people ; and whenever, or wherever, it is found, we must allow that it will be fitted for one legislative chamber. On the other

hand, the mischief of having only one chamber will be proportionate to the excitability of temperament, the frivolousness and the proneness to believe in a majority which belong to the people amongst whom such a form of government is established.

Again, to take an instance of the effect of surrounding governments. It can hardly be imagined that a despotism would be extravagantly despotic, or an aristocracy perniciously aristocratic, which was surrounded by countries enjoying remarkably free institutions.—Possibly at the present moment one of the happiest forms of government to live under, would be one that had been thoroughly autocratic, which preserved the vigour that such governments possess as regards their foreign action and their internal administration, but in which the arbitrary tendencies were checked by the fear or example of neighbouring states and by free opinions pressing in upon the country at all points.

In asserting the importance of the form of government, I do not mean to say that in itself the question whether the chief magistrate in a state should be an hereditary king, or an elective king, or a president for life, or a president for a term of years, is half so important as the tenure

of land, or the laws regarding the transfer of property, or even the arrangements for police and for the preservation of the public health. But then if one form of government is likely to hinder the consideration of these good things more than another; if, for instance, the constitution of the government be subject to such political mutation, that the state is always preparing to be governed instead of gaining the advantages of government, then this form is a very important evil in substance. If, on the other hand, the political action in a state is so torpid, that the minds of men are never agitated by political questions, one considerable part of human education is left out, and though this omission may be desirable at a certain age, or rather nonage, of a nation, the sooner it begins to develop into something admitting of more political thought the better. In fact, forms of government may be as diversified as the forms in nature of plants, of trees, of animals, provided there be the same adaptation in the one case as in the other to the surrounding circumstances.

Again, there is a matter connected with the form of government or perhaps we should

rather say, connected with the spirit but expressed in the form, which is obviously of the highest importance ; namely, the proportion observed in the original constitution of the different elements of power in the state. For example, how much depends in a free government upon the happy admixture of local and central authority ! If there be too much local power, how much time will elapse before the results of collected wisdom and the experience of the shrewdest men in public affairs will be carried into the local administration : how much unkindness and severity will be added to the local malignity already sufficient in most places : how completely the imperial ideas are likely to be sacrificed to petty privileges and near-sighted interests. On the other hand, if the central power prevails too much, the minds and energies of the small communities dependent upon it are weakened by disuse : at the centre itself, too much influence falls into the hands of factions, so that suddenness becomes the arbitress of national affairs : and moreover there is danger of everything being sacrificed to any one idea, or fancy, prevailing at the seat of government.

Similar dangers may be shown to exist in any government that is partly representative and

partly autocratic, if the just proportions are not well maintained and room not given for both principles to do their work in. The vague, querulous, disjointed, clamorous, inconclusive way of transacting affairs which belongs to legislative assemblies, would absolutely prevent all peace and prosperity in a country where there was no autocratic power to counteract the evil. And by autocratic power I do not mean only that which may emanate from a president, a king, a consul, or a dictator, but that for instance, which results from the hoarded weight of wisdom and reputation which may belong to any one man, and which does in our own time belong to one eminent person in our own senate, whose view of a question is something quite different in its effect from that of any other member in the House of Lords, however eminent. Again, if the autocratic element prevail too much, that happens to the whole community which was shown as likely to happen to small dependent communities when the central power is too great; namely, that there will be a sad apathy about political affairs, for men seldom think or care much about matters which they can scarcely ever hope to influence.

The result of all I have said about forms of

government, is to show that it would be very pedantic to pronounce upon any form of government as best for any particular country without a large consideration of its circumstances; that there are peculiar dangers belonging to each form of government; and that much care must always be given to ensure a just combination of the various elements of power in a state.

2. OBJECTS OF GOVERNMENT.

In the first place, let us be careful not to limit too much the objects of government. Governments in past ages having interfered so much, and often so unwisely, has given us a peculiar distaste for what we call government interference, and has made men contented to accept a very low view of the objects and purposes of government. But government is not merely police. It is something personal; it has a representative character; its business is not confined to the care of life and property; it has in fact some national part to play in the world, some great character to sustain. In short, it seems to me that the just idea of government is not fulfilled unless it acts with the greatness of soul and the extent of insight and foresight of the best men in the state,

and with the power of the whole body, in those matters which cannot be accomplished by individual exertion. Now this is what many a man expresses unconsciously when he exclaims, 'The government should undertake this great work; should reward this eminent man, promote that discovery, encourage that art;' or words to that effect. He means that the government should express the wisdom and gratitude of the best part of the nation in a way which that part could not do, or ought not to be expected to do, by its own individual exertion. I am asked then a question, which has been one of the difficulties of modern times, 'Is a government to have a religion? Is there to be such a thing as a state conscience?' To which I say at once, yes. It is to act with the conscience of its wisest and best men in matters of religion as well as in all other matters; and so it does in the course of ages.

But to descend to some of its daily occupations. One of the first things for a government is self-preservation. Complaint has been made, that Bacon and other writers upon politics of his time insist too much upon preserving the sovereign's rights and powers: I am far from thinking that this care of theirs was mere time-serving, and am inclined to think that there ought to be a similar

care and apprehension for all governments on the part of wise men who are in them or live under them. 'How is the king's government to be carried on?'—a memorable question asked by a great man of our own day—is one which should be frequently present to the minds of all persons in authority, or possessing influence.

Now this care for self-preservation on the part of government, may seem to be a selfish thing and likely to lead to mere repressiveness and inactivity; but these are not the means by which I consider that self-preservation will ever be effected. On the contrary, I believe that if governors and people in authority really understood human nature, they would perceive that some judicious activity on their part is the only thing which can give life to their institutions. There is no strength in stagnation: cautious passiveness and official negativeness will be found very insignificant barriers against evil either in quiet or in turbulent times; and such ways are especially to be eschewed in the still times just before turbulence.

I do not mean by this to recommend the mere pretence of action, in order to amuse, or terrify, or divert the attention of a people: still less to suggest anything like the intense wickedness, of

which we have seen instances in our times, of undertaking unjust exploits abroad to keep peace at home. These, like all false ways, only put off the evil day of reckoning. But the object of a government should be to breed up the men under it to do with less and less of it, or so to extend its action, that if its interference and control are not diminished, it is only because its sphere of usefulness is enlarged. People in authority should understand that government must be a thing of growth; must attend to, if not comprehend, the future. On the contrary, many of them have not even been provident about the means of perpetuating their own system, much less of making it grow into anything better.

This brings me to the consideration of one of the great objects of government both as regards self-preservation and the general welfare of the state. I allude to the breeding up of successors. I believe that almost the greatest test of wise men being in power, is that they are anxious to provide successors. This loving care for futurity is an equal proof of their goodness and their sagacity. And, as regards their own renown, surely that man's life must be pronounced a great failure whose purposes die with him. That is why

many a potent conqueror seems now so small a person in our eyes. The same principles hold good in private life. A man of just and open mind is careful to bring up those around him to do without him. As head of a family, or an office, or a magistracy, he looks around him from time to time, to see who can take his place, and how he can be best educated to do so. On the other hand, a grasping tenure of power is the evidence of selfishness or senility. Looking down the long lines of history, it is to be observed, I think, that those who have been most capable of using power well, have clung with the least tenacity to it.

The objects then of government, briefly stated, should be commensurate with those wants of humanity which cannot be supplied at all, or as well, by individual action, or by any corporate body less than the state: these wants will vary according to time and place, will be fewer in one country than in another, but in no country that I know of, are they at present otherwise than very numerous and very imperative.

3. MODE AND MEANS OF GOVERNMENT.

BEFORE entering into the details of this branch of the subject, it will be worth while to consider


what are the essential difficulties of government in the abstract. The first difficulty that will occur to most persons is the variety of men's minds. 'Quot homines, tot sententiæ!' So many men, so many opinions, as the proverb says. But after all, this is not the greatest difficulty. However numerous and various the elements for calculation, the problem would be certainly soluble if the elements were known. But in governing men these elements are not known. The difficulty is, to understand men's minds; and, from the isolation in which all living creatures dwell, this can never be more than approximated to. More than one great thinker of this generation has studied this isolation, but its effects have not been thought of as regards their bearing upon government. Yet in the earliest stages and the first forms of government, this is the greatest difficulty. How hard it is (almost impossible) to come at the mind even of a child! People will grow up together, will live together in some bond of affection, and with some harmony; and yet the most important parts of the nature of each be unknown to the other, and remain undeveloped. Extending our view from the first form of human government, the paternal, through all the stages of domestic and

social government, till we come to statesmanship, the same law of mental isolation pervading, the same difficulty of governing prevails. Shrouded for the most part in a mist, each individual mind, though it may be partially revealed to us by sympathy, is seldom or never completely seen or comprehended.

How do the above considerations apply to Government in its largest sense? Obviously in many ways. Factional minorities rule, persuading themselves and those around them that they are the voice of the nation. It is from this isolation of mind, which it requires considerable imagination to penetrate at all, that different classes misunderstand each other as individuals do. How often, in all ages, have the governors misunderstood the governed; and the governed (having less of the power of making their way by imagination into the minds of other men) still more misunderstood their governors. Moreover, in government, it often happens that second-rate men of low desires and peculiarly unimaginative natures (who are called practical because they lack imagination, or because they have been successful for themselves,) are listened to, and that too on critical occasions; and their want of understanding the souls of men is fatal.

Again, the difficulty of understanding men is the leading difficulty in the choice of agents; and indeed it enters into all the varied questions of government—as, indeed, into all the relations of life. It may be said that the above-mentioned evils and difficulties are caused by a deficiency of perception and imagination. But why are great powers of perception and imagination wanted? To counteract the difficulties arising from men's minds being set apart from each other and therefore hard to comprehend.

Another great difficulty in government is the difficulty of conjoint action; I mean the difficulty of coming to a result, and still more of predicating one, when many people are met together to do or to determine anything. In order to form some notion of the difficulties inherent in conjoint action, it is advisable to observe it in the simplest instances. Suppose that two men have to walk to a particular place at which they are both minded to arrive at the same time, in which case therefore their wills and opinions are the same as regards the main object in pursuit. But their walking together may very much vary the result, and if a third person had to calculate with exactness upon the result, he would have to consider what the effect might be of their




companionship. Emulation might quicken the pace of both; good nature might retard the pace of one to accommodate the other. The way might be lost in the animation of conversation, or their joint sagacity might find an easier route than either alone would have discovered. But this is a very simple case. Here, the same action is performed by both men and is not the result of combined activity. But now suppose that a cannon so placed as to command an important pass is to be fired by fifteen persons, and cannot be fired without the fifteen combining to do so at the same time, each having to pull some wire that is necessary for the purpose. No one is to give the word of command. They have however talked the matter over, and have resolved at what point in the approach of the enemy, it would be best to fire; moreover, they are all true staunch men, and mean to make a good defence. Still I should be very sorry to have much of my country's welfare dependent upon that cannon's going off at the right time, or indeed of its going off at all. These may be thought slight and insufficient instances; but they may bring the difficulty of conjoint action home to the mind; and some of the same causes that operate in these minor instances will operate in the

greatest. In Cabinets, Privy Councils, Committees, Assemblies, Parliaments, Commissions, and, indeed, in all bodies met for the conduct or determination of business, not only will vanity and envy be developed by the presence of numbers; but the feeling of responsibility will be lessened; unwise reliance on others be encouraged; indolence find good grounds for being indulged in; the passions be quickened; and the question often be buried under, or mislaid amongst, a variety of opinions and suggestions. To form an accurate judgment of what will happen, you have to allow not only for the variety of men's opinions, but for the difference of their powers of attention and of their pertinacity. If we could know the number of resolutions which have been carried under the influence of mere fatigue and disgust, we should be astonished at the effect that weariness and fear of 'damnable iteration,' as Falstaff calls it, have produced. Besides, the hours are largely wasted in these discussions or attempts at conjoint action; it becomes time to do something, or to come to some resolve, and what happens to be nearest at hand and most practicable at the moment, is at last in a hurry determined upon. Often the confusion arising from all these sources

is such, that though considerable activity is manifested in the discussions and labours of these bodies of men which we have been considering, the result, as in the perturbations of the planets, is found equal to nothing, as La Place consoles us by showing.

I have not dwelt upon the above difficulty with a view to depreciate conjoint action and deliberation, which we must have if we would avoid despotism, but I wish merely to point out an essential difficulty in all government, and one which in this country (where there are so many minor governing bodies for affairs of commerce) it is very desirable should be thought of and investigated, and limits put, if possible, to the evils attending upon it.

The above considerations, (especially those referring to the isolation of mind) may seem too subtle or too plain; but the most arduous and complicated questions in life are generally resolvable into their primeval elements of difficulty, and should be occasionally looked at in that way. The great questions of human nature are ever coming before us in new forms; for civilization does not help us to escape from ourselves, but only by conjoint action to make the most of ourselves.



To proceed now with the means of government in detail. Incomparably the first means is the procurement of able men; not tools, but men. It is very hard to prophesy of any business or affair in the world, how it will turn out; but it cannot be a bad thing to have an able man to deal with it. The Chinese government has now subsisted many generations, proceeding upon the principle of choosing the best men for official employment. I do not say they have gone the best way to choose them, but their intention has been to find them, if they could. Such a spirit should actuate every governing person, who should consider the man he appoints to an office as in some measure his representative—a representative, too, as will often happen, for life. Governments will be sure to have cause enough for shame, if they neglect this duty, for a bad appointment breaks out some day or other.

But the difficulty is to find able men. To hear some persons talk, you would suppose that it was the simplest thing imaginable to make good appointments, and that it needed nothing but honesty on the part of the person appointing. But sound men of business are very rare, much more rare than any body would be likely to conjecture who had not had considerable experience

of life. And what makes the difficulty greater is, that the faculty for business is seldom to be ascertained by any *à priori* test. Formal examinations of all kinds fail.

For look what it is that you demand in a man of business! Talents for the particular business, the art of bringing out those talents before the eyes of men, temper to deal with men, inventiveness together with prudence, and in addition to many other moral qualities, that of moral courage, which I have remarked to be the rarest gift of all.

As it is, very many men fail from a want of proportion in their gifts. Here is a man so clever that he apprehends almost anything, but there is a light flame of restless vanity underneath this superficial cleverness, so that it is always boiling over when you do not want it. One man makes it his business to doubt, another to fear, another to hope, another to condemn; one is the slave of rules, another cannot construct anything unless he have free space for his theories which this old world does not now admit of. Many of these defects are not fully ascertained until the man is absolutely tried ('*Capax imperii nisi imperasset*'). On the other hand, there are men whose talents for govern-

ing are not developed until they are placed in power, like the Palm-branches which spring out only at the top of the tree. But still these considerations must not induce men in authority to say that since choice is so difficult, it must be left to chance or favour, but it only shows how wary statesmen should be in their choice, and that when they once do get hold of a good man, how much they should make of him.

Next to offices come honours as means at the disposal of government. Cant, which is the creature of civilization and must be expected to attain a great height as civilization advances, takes many forms; and one of the forms it has taken in modern times is the pretending to despise honours, calling them baubles, tinsel, toys, trappings and other hard names. This is all nonsense. They are very valuable things, and men of clear and open minds, who are after all less ignominiously swayed by such things than other men, will tell you so. Nelson's exclamation on going into action, 'A peerage or Westminster Abbey,' will find some response in the minds of many of the worthiest amongst us. In fact it is difficult for a government so to

deteriorate and degrade its honours as to make them unacceptable.

Now, in considering the distribution of honours, I am not going to say anything Quixotic, such as to pretend for a moment that they should always be given strictly according to merit. There are several reasons why they should not. In the first place, if they were always given according to merit, it would detract from the power of the sovereign or governing authority of whatever kind. A sovereign or minister should have it in his power, I think, occasionally to confer honours upon a friend or adherent upon the simple grounds of friendship, adherency, or liking; and it may be remarked, as I have noticed before, that the friends and favourites of the great, from Horace and Virgil downwards, have in general been remarkable men. Then again it should not be declared that honours are to be given absolutely according to merit for this reason, that it is impossible to provide the time, attention and skill requisite for such a distribution. Thirdly, if honours were supposed to be given strictly according to merit, how much that supposition would aggravate the discomfort of the unsuccessful, that is, of the

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great majority of us in the world. At present, men find ready consolation in the thought, which is a just one, that not only is merit frequently left unrewarded, but that oftentimes it stands fatally in the way of worldly success.

Having now given several reasons against attempting to make honours entirely dependent upon merit, I may with more boldness affirm, that it is indispensable to confer many of them according to real desert. Otherwise government parts with a substantial source of power and influence. In the creation of any order or dignity, there may be instances of favouritism or of yielding to second-rate and partially unworthy motives; but if the order or dignity is not to lose much of its favour with mankind, it must contain and illustrate a fair amount of worth and service.

In order to make the honours more desirable and capable of being more easily dealt with, they should be of various kinds, and even some of the very highest amongst them should not require the possession of fortune in the person honoured. Finally it should be remembered that the distribution of honours is one of the especial functions of government: which like coinage, taxation, or the declaration of peace or war,

cannot be performed by private individuals. It is a case where the state comes in as a person and proclaims 'This is the man whom the king delighteth to honour.' If the king delights to honour foolish people, or people, as Hamlet describes them, merely 'spacious in the possession of dirt,' the honours will be accordingly depreciated, and government will have debased this important function of conferring honours, a proceeding as injurious in its way as debasing the coinage would be in its.

In coming now to the mode of government, i.e. the way of applying the means of government, it must be first observed how difficult it is to enter upon such a subject without going much into detail; and, moreover, for the suggestions to be of most practical use, they must have some reference to the modes of government at present existing. There is no country which has been a country of great affairs for many years that will not have adopted various excellent devices for the furtherance of business. The form for instance of a Cabinet and many of the Cabinet arrangements for business in this country, are the result of much adaptation, and could not easily be amended. It is obvious that

in every form of government considerable attention should be paid to the distribution of functions amongst the great officers of state; and that care must be taken to make the functions of these officers grow and change with the growth and fluctuation of the affairs of the country: In our own country the great officers of state are too few. I do not presume to speak of any division of the Lord Chancellor's functions, not being conversant with them. But the present duties of the Home Secretary might be divided, I think, with great advantage. Let there be a Minister of Justice, who should have direction in all official matters connected with the course of justice and the maintenance of order. The custody of lunatics is a branch of the Lord Chancellor's functions which might well devolve on this new officer. The other Home Secretary might retain the name of Home Secretary, and be intrusted with all matters appertaining to the education, health, and sustenance of the people.

Again, it appears that, for a very long time, the duties of Colonial Secretary have been too much for any one man. Where is the difficulty of having two Colonial Ministers: one for Canada and the West Indies; and the

other, taking the management of all the other colonies, and being called the Colonial Minister? Does any one who knows anything about the subject, doubt of there being enough business in the Colonial Office to employ any two of the greatest minds in the country as chiefs of that department?

But there may then be too many in the Cabinet. If so, remove those officers who have less distinguished functions. The Paymaster of the Forces and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster have sometimes been in the Cabinet. Let them give place to the Minister of Justice and to the Secretary for Canada and the West Indies. I am well aware of the advantage of having occasionally one or two places in the Cabinet for men who cannot undertake the management of laborious departments. But, without going further into detail, I feel confident that Cabinets will not be greatly embarrassed in finding room in some way or other for the two great officers proposed.


Having now supposed the business divided amongst certain departments, and fit persons chosen to preside over these departments, and able men selected to fill the subordinate offices; there is still to my mind a want of something

which I think may be noticed in all Governments of modern times, and that is, a power of attracting from time to time fresh ability and fresh views, and putting the department in reasonable communication with the world about it. I believe that what I am going to say is new, and being new and therefore unpractised, it is liable to the objection of not being practicable. I am sure, however, that the deficiency I have noticed does exist, that it will not be supplied by Committees of the Legislative body, nor even by permanent commissions; and therefore any way of attempting to supply this deficiency may at least deserve attention. What is wanted is to bring more intellectual power within command of the heads of departments, and moreover that this power should neither be elicited in a hostile manner, nor on the other hand that it should be too subservient. It should rather be attainable without the walls of an office than within. It should be at hand for a minister; but it should not be too closely mixed up with ordinary official life. The plan then is this, that there should be gradually formed, in connection with the two or three first departments of the state, a body of able

men not bound down to regular official employment, but who should be eligible for special purposes—for the minister to devise with, to consult, to be informed by. There will be a likelihood of freer range of thought and more enterprise amongst such men than amongst those uniformly engaged in official duty. They would be of the nature of Counsellors to a Department, without forming the check and hinderance that a council would be. It can hardly be doubted that it would often be an immense advantage to a minister, to be able to call in a man of known ability, conversant with the department and yet not much tied by it, to hear his opinion upon some difficult dispute (from the colonies for instance) in which both the minister and his subordinates may be liable to err from their very knowledge of the parties. Then, again, what a gain it would be to place on this staff men of long standing in the colonies who had returned to pass the remainder of their lives here, of whose experience the minister might well avail himself. This same body would give the minister a means of choosing official men such as has never been devised. It should not have any collective power. Parliament is

sufficient check upon any minister. In modern times ministers want strength more than restraint.

Having treated, though necessarily with great brevity, of the form, the objects, and the mode and means of government; I come now to what is perhaps the most important part of the subject: namely, how the governed ought to regard government. People forget, when they talk of government as a thing apart from themselves, how large a portion of the motive force of government they are themselves, and what duties therefore are incumbent upon them. Now, he who does not bring into government, whether as governor or subject, some religious feeling, by which I do not mean anything that he may find exclusively in the church of England, or the church of Rome, or any other church in the world, but who does not fulfil his duties to his fellow man from some higher motive than expediency or the intention to fulfil the conditions of some imaginary social contract, is likely to make but an indifferent governor or an indifferent subject. It is from the absence of this pious feeling that all systems of government which are merely the creations of logic, (of




which an Abbé Sièyes can make two in a morning) are so liable to be upset, perhaps as speedily as they are made. You talk of rights, duties, powers, checks, counter-checks, citizenship, patriotism, and get up all the apparatus of government, and yet it breaks down with next to no weight upon it. And why? 'Each man,' as the Poet Thomson said when his friend wanted him to marry some lady of many charms and merits, but who had not the charm of being lovable in the poet's eyes, 'Each man has an uncontrollable imagination of his own.' So, as regards these quickly-made systems of government, in which no appeal is made to anything above humanity, a man says, This may be all very well, but it is a scheme that does not suit me; I am not your creature; and he forthwith sets to work to demolish a scheme or form of government which has not the least divinity in his eyes; which does not suit his 'uncontrollable imagination.'

But men ought to be so brought up as to look with a reverent eye upon the civil ordinances of life. Almost the greatest distinction between wise and good men and the thoughtless and reckless is, that the former are ever anxious to get the utmost good out of all that is around

them. They see that what with the difficulty occasioned by the acute disorders of the world, such as failing harvests, wars, pestilences—and also by the chronic complaints, namely, the daily troubles and distresses of life, government is a very serious matter, and they learn to regard it religiously. They see, or perhaps feel more than see, that withal there is a spirit of beneficence and order throughout creation, and they are conscious that they are acting in consonance with the great laws of the universe and the will of their Maker in endeavouring to make human affairs go on well and wisely. This reference to something above them and beyond them gives earnestness to their wish to improve civil institutions, takes away recklessness in doing so, represses selfishness, establishes justice and re-proves self-will. Without piety there will be no good government.

In free countries, (and since constitutional modes of government are spreading, more countries will come under the denomination of free), a large body of the people will be required to act in a spirit of piety, not only in regard to their duties as subjects, but as governors; for with them rests the choice of representatives. It becomes incumbent upon them to seek out wise



and good men to represent them, always remembering that the wisest and best will have to be sought for, and that they will be the least likely to fall in at once with all the prejudices of their constituents. In ancient days, cities of the Roman Empire would pray to be allowed to build a temple to the reigning emperor. Not giving way to impulses of servility, but anxious to take a noble part in imperial transactions, in dignifying the empire to which they belong, cities have now an opportunity of doing so by nominating men of worth to represent them. If exclusively led by local influences, yielding to clamour, showing no confidence in what is great, appreciating no worth that will not square exactly with their present views, allured by foolish, glittering, or bitter words, or still worse if basely bought by money, representative bodies entrust great functions to unworthy persons, let them no longer complain of any doings of the imperial government or expect that their gross delinquency in the early stages of the formation of government will somehow or other be remedied before the superstructure is completed ; that what is corrupt in its first growth is to be pure in its full-blown maturity ; that Cedars of Lebanon will be developed from fungi on the wall.

ELLESMERE. I wish you could give a volume to this subject; but no—on second thoughts I do not. Your volume might be treated with more respect than an essay, but would be put aside with other solemn works upon the subject, whereas the essay has some chance of being read. It was only the other day that I was reading in one of Hallam's books an account of the works of some writer on government, and they seemed to me to be admirably fitted for the present day as well as for all time, but the author's name was one I had never heard of before, and the treatise being a laborious and learned one will of course remain unknown to the generality of people. And then again, if you were to write a book you would begin to think how to fill it up instead of studying, as in an essay, how to contract to the uttermost what you have to say.

DUNSFORD. I thoroughly approve of what you have said about the spirit in which government is to be regarded by both the governors and the governed.

ELLESMERE. The pith of that is the advice to electors. The fault in the present day is not that popular feeling is not sufficiently represented,

but that the intellect of the country is not. Political education is, in comparison with other branches of education, highly developed here. Consider the manner in which newspapers are conducted. How admirably on the whole they (I speak of them as if they were persons) have behaved throughout these trying times. It were to be wished that more of the statesman-like ability which is rife in the country should find its way into parliament.

MILVERTON. Or that ministers were more independent of parliament, at least in the choice of official men.

DUNSFORD. I am sure that the ordeal which men have to go through in order to become members of parliament, or to continue such, is of a kind which must be peculiarly offensive to some of the minds we should most like to see mixed up with public affairs.

MILVERTON. Yes, of course; that is one of the drawbacks upon representative government. The evil might be mitigated though by creating a certain number of official seats in parliament—say for the first and second office in each department. Some of the fittest men to be listened to, are amongst those who have neither the leisure, the money, nor the temperament, to cultivate a


constituency. The plan of ex-officio seats would greatly add to the independence of public men.

ELLESMERE. It is by no means a new suggestion.

MILVERTON. A suggestion may be ever so old; but it is not exhausted, until it is acted upon, or rejected on sufficient reason.


ELLESMERE. I think ministers of late years have been too much afraid of parliament. I believe if they would attempt less in the way of legislation, prepare what they do intend to do with great care, and insist upon carrying out their intentions, things would get on much better.

But let me tell you a story. My friend —, the great traveller, was lately describing to me the polity, if so it may be called, of a nation that lives somewhere between some mountains and some seas, I forget where, but the boys at the nearest national school would be able to tell you if you only gave them one or two facts to go upon. Well, my friend tells me that when anything of political interest occurs amongst this people (whose name I have forgotten) everything that is foolish or wise, kind or uncharitable, true or false is allowed to be said upon it in all parts of the nation; then throughout their territory these savages collect together in little knots, dance and



howl and rave and dress themselves in ribbons. From these minor assemblages they select two or three individuals, my friend could not make out for what reason, but you know how difficult it is to understand a foreign people's ways. Sometimes he thought it was for their fatness, sometimes for their youth and innocence, sometimes the choice appeared to be connected with the favourite liquor of the country; there seemed to be no rule of any kind. These individuals, for whatever reason chosen, were then elevated upon little stages, which appeared to have the effect of making them talk wildly and at random; and my friend conjectured, that as we say here, 'in vino veritas,' so there it was held, that upon these stages whatever folly was in a man was sure to come out of him. One or two of these exalted individuals were then chosen, it seemed to be for a quality that we should much approve in our schoolboys, for as he observed, those were chiefly favoured who could repeat like a lesson learnt by heart most quickly and with most alacrity the cries uttered by the howling multitudes around them. All the individuals thus chosen were brought into a large booth surrounded by several smaller ones. Then some very odd ceremonies took place, almost of a mu-

sical kind. One of the people in the big booth would get up and say something, as my friend conjectured, about the matter in hand; then another said the same thing with more words and a little stammering; a third repeated the same thing with more words and more confusion; and, perhaps, introduced some new sayings of his own which, however, had nothing to do with the question and at which they all laughed. There appeared to be a chorus and an anti-chorus, each having its peculiar tune. So the clamour would go on, like an air with many variations, for days, weeks, months, years, varied by occasional dancing in and out from the large booth to the small ones, which seemed to be a very exciting business. At last when the subject had been danced upon and sung about till they were tired, something was done or something was agreed not to be done. Very frequently a sudden gravity or wisdom, (the result my friend thought of the weather) would fall upon the people generally and upon the small section of it in the great booth; and then they ceased their singing and dancing, embraced one another, said they were of one mind, and one and all joined in bearing out with pomp to the great tombs of the nation the dead body of some wise resolve which they might



have carried into effect long ago, and which might have been of great use to them.

But my friend said they seemed to be a contented people, for at least no man amongst them could say that his folly had not had a hearing.

This is a strange story; but travellers do tell strange stories.

MILVERTON. You may ridicule anything you know, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. How very jealous these writers are! nobody's fables are to be admitted but their own, or what is like their own. If my narrative had been a little more delicate and refined, and not told in my broad coarse way, but in reality a great deal more severe, Milverton would have said it was very clever and very appropriate.

MILVERTON. You would make out all our proceedings to be such folly, whereas we know that really very great and solid improvements in legislation have been effected in the last half century. What I am at present afraid of is, lest a certain vulgarity of political thinking should prevail. That word vulgarity is rather vague, but will express to you what I mean; that kind of thinking or feeling which induces men to sacrifice the future and obliterate the

past for the sake of the present; which despises all that is chivalrous, recognises no indirect advantages, does not conceive that there may be a national soul as well as a national stomach, would willingly see a colony drift away if it could not be proved to have returned five per cent. in hard cash on the outlay of the mother country. This vulgarity of thinking is ramified in various directions, and will appear in the way of discussing things as well as in the conclusions arrived at.

Now I believe that vulgarity is generally as much opposed to wisdom as it is to good taste.

ELLESMERE. Give me your hand: I forgive you for your depreciation of my traveller's story in consideration of that last sentence of yours: and I will even be audacious enough to add another clause to the aphorism. Vulgarity is generally as much opposed to wisdom as it is to good taste; and good taste is too indolent to take the trouble of proving the near relationship between herself and wisdom.

LUCY. May I go back to the travels of Mr. Ellesmere's friend and ask whether there was anything else talked in these booths besides politics?

ELLESMERE. Yes, Miss Daylmer. This savage

tribe was not so supremely happy but that they had law suits sometimes to make them happier.

MILVERTON. That reminds me of saying that I think perhaps the greatest legal reforms are to be obtained by official reforms. As things now are, the court of Chancery, saving your presence, Ellesmere, is the thing most resembling the Holy Office of former times. It is the Protestant Inquisition, only that, instead of confining its victims in dungeons, it allows them to go about for a time, just as if they were not ruined, but they know better.

ELLESMERE. I shall thwart your intention of dragging me into a defence of the Court of Chancery by going back to your projected official reform, or rather official addition—your imaginary Council. Will they cost any thing, these gentlemen?

MILVERTON. Certainly: for you cannot rely upon work that is given: but, cost what it will, let us be well governed. The general satisfaction arising from wise conduct in the executive is almost inappreciable in money. A hundred thousand a year more spent in getting head-work done for the state would probably be most economical expenditure.

ELLESMERE. Yes I agree to that. Let me ask another question. Are these Counsellors to be known?

MILVERTON. Yes, as well known as the under Secretaries and Clerks of the departments.

ELLESMERE. Well now I will tell you my opinion. The scheme I think is a good one—too good to be carried into effect. The Minister who should propose it would be liable to be told he had all manner of mean and selfish ends in view, and that would scare most public men.

MILVERTON. I can only say, it ought not. Any man who does understand at all the question of official reform ought to make a point of bringing forward his views, if only from the consideration that these subjects will always lack popular breezes.

ELLESMERE. Reverting to the general subject, Milverton, I am not sure that the essay does not tend too much to bureaucracy.

MILVERTON. No, indeed! This busy, bustling, energetic England is the last place where there is any danger of bureaucracy, as you call it: and we often do want some moulding power to put all this energy into form.

ELLESMERE. Well, I believe no harm would come from strengthening the executive intel-

lectually. If we found official people riding us with too sharp a curb, we should soon throw them over our heads. And it is a great grievance not to have things well administered. There is a capital passage in one of Sir Francis Palgrave's books saying, how mal-administration in little things forms the current of public discontents. I forget the words.

MILVERTON. There is something I wanted to say in the essay, but I did not see how to bring it in—and I am not sure that I can fully explain myself even to you. I should like to introduce more of the feeling of personality in the executive. Personality is not the word perhaps; but you know what I mean.

ELLESMERE. Yes, I have some dim notion. You told us you would have a state conscience.

MILVERTON. Yes, but this does not, of necessity, declare that a state must hold certain theological tenets and enforce them by bayonets, test acts, or other extreme modes of reasoning. As a land-owner, in the government of a private estate on which persons of different religions dwell together, may govern equitably, without at the same time ceasing to uphold his own opinions by fair means, so may a state. But, at any rate, if the idea of a state is not to convey

a distinct intellectual being, it should have a distinct moral being. It should give us the idea of the best man of that day and country, if not of the best theologian. Where the executive differs from law, is in its possessing personality. It is not an immoveable scientific apparatus, but represents flesh and blood, and is flesh and blood. A good executive officer feels in all he does that he is fulfilling a part, however small, of the functions of a creature that has rights and duties. He will not defraud it, nor suffer it to defraud others. A monarchy helps to keep this personality before us.

The idea of a conscience belonging to bodies of men has been ridiculed—and no wonder, considering what we have known men do in their collective capacity throughout all ages. But it means simply this, that duties follow power. A railway board has to satisfy its conscience respecting the matters which it has taken in hand.

ELLESMERE. What do you say, Dunsford, to all this? You are sure, though, to be glad of getting in a conscience, though but a state one.

DUNS福德. I have felt all along out of my depth, having no experience in any of these matters. But Milverton's views seem to me

to be likely to ensure more humanity in administration.

ELLESMERE. But now, Milverton, I wish, instead of indulging us with all manner of generalities about state consciences and such things, you would give us some of the results of your own experience of official life. You often talk about what a sad thing it is that men should be subdued by their trade or calling; but, I can see, your short experience of official life has impressed upon you an alarming amount of official cautiousness. You very rarely talk about the men you must have observed or their ways of business: all this with you is '*altâ mente repostum*,' merely coming out in aphorisms and dark sayings of various kinds.

MILVERTON. Well, I will tell you what struck me most in official life—the singular honesty and good intention with which it is carried on in England. I do not mean merely the common honesty of not betraying secrets and not seeking after sinister purposes—that merit official people share with bankers' clerks and the mercantile community in general, whose honesty is something wonderful—but I mean the less obvious honesty of being careful that things should be fairly considered and that right should be done.

I believe, and with some experience of the subject, that if the private letter-books of most ministers of modern times could be laid open to the public, containing copies of those letters marked 'private and confidential,' the public would soon throw them down in disgust as unreadable, from their not containing anything wrong or scandalous, and therefore not being at all amusing. Where I do think we may find some fault, as I have said before, is in the want of courage in official men. You see the ordeal they have to undergo from the Press and Parliament is such, that we, the public, have long ago surmounted the danger of ministers doing anything fraudulent or unconstitutional; *now* our fear ought to be, lest they should be too much afraid of us to undertake what they think right. It is the same in dealing with public as with private agents. If you look too sharply after them, they will endeavour to escape your blame rather than to do your business. Of course there will be noble exceptions to this, but such will be the general tendency.

ELLESMERE. I really believe you would have us imagine that statesmen and official men are more honest than lawyers.

MILVERTON. No—not exactly that—but their

(the statesmen's) business is to find out what is right and serviceable—not what can be best said or done for one side. The training is in that respect a good one for the mind.

ELLESMERE. And now, Miss Daylmer, we have heard next to nothing from you about government. Ah, you women are too wise to write or talk about what you know best how to practise. Suppose we were writing a formal essay on feminine government, how should we enumerate the means at the disposal of government. I should say, Poutings, sullenness, tears, dancing with some one else, judicious faintings, then half smiles half tears, loving looks—these things perpetually and rapidly succeeding one another—so that men's hearts would be harder than Alpine rocks if they could withstand such alternations of vinegar and sunshine.

LUCY. What we should need most would be sensible men for us to have to manage, which seems also, if I make out the essay, to be the greatest difficulty for your grand doings in government as for our little ones.

DUNS福德. As Ellesmere and Lucy have begun to talk nonsense, Milverton, I think we may consider the conversation concluded and break up our sitting.

ELLESMERE. No, I wanted to say something about honours. I quite agree with what you said about them, Milverton; but I want to show you the reason why they are so much desired in all ages. It occurred to me for the first time while you were reading. Men desire marks of honour for themselves, not to make a noise in the world and to be pointed out by the fingers of the passers-by, so much as in order to show their private friends that they are not such fools as these friends say they are, and to quell domestic malignity.

MILVERTON. It is not malignity, Ellesmere; at least very often not. It is frequently mere ignorance. If you had a younger brother, for instance, of great musical talents, his gaining any honour or reward for their exercise would prove to you the existence of those talents in a way which you would never have arrived at for yourself. Your respect for him would probably be increased, as you found it was agreed upon by those who should know, that he could do something well. Honours, you see, not only reward merit, but declare its existence.

ELLESMERE. I suppose you are right: at any rate you will be able to outvote me, for I can see you have Dunsford and Miss Daylmer on your

side. But let us leave off now talking about government, and have a walk. Thank goodness I have not many persons to govern—only myself and my clerk. The former though often contrives to give me a great deal of trouble.





S L A V E R Y.

CHAPTER I.

AS the following essays are all upon the same subject, I bring them together, although they were not read in the same place or in the same year, as will be seen; and, indeed, did not always follow in the order in which I have placed them.

A short time after our last reading, Milverton mentioned that he should be ready to read something more to us, and intimated that it would be of a graver character than what we had been used to hear of late from him. Notwithstanding the threatened gravity, Lucy begged me to let her accompany me; and Ellesmere did not refuse to attend. We met at our accustomed place in Milverton's garden; and, after the usual greetings, Ellesmere thus began.

ELLESMERE. Well, Miss Lucy, and so you are

here, too. What courage there is in the female breast! Did not Milverton inform you that he was going to tax our patience largely? What is your idea now of a grave subject?

LUCY. One that should make even Mr. Ellesmere in earnest, as distinguished from a dull subject which would only make him more fond of gibing and more provokingly severe.

ELLESMERE. Fair maiden, your remarks are unpleasantly clever; and if you say anything more of the same kind this morning, I will give out that you are a wit, a ruinous character, I can tell you, to affix to a young lady in her teens.

LUCY. Pray do not, sir; I am all submission for the future.

MILVERTON. I do not know, Lucy, whether my subject will come under your definition; however, I will not keep you any longer in suspense,—Slavery is the subject.

ELLESMERE. The very one I guessed and had just whispered in Dunsford's ear (he had done so). You see I had given a shrewd look at your book-shelves, and watched the additions from time to time. Then the problem was, to see what one subject would fulfil the requisite conditions, and account for a man not utterly

irrational reading books of travel, geography, books about the different races of mankind, pamphlets upon sugar, blue books on the West Indies, and old Spanish chronicles. And by a process of combination and elimination, which, if I were to work it out on paper, would occupy a notable place in the ninth edition, ninth is it not? (the rogue knew that I was only preparing a second) of Dunsford's work on the second part of Algebra, I found out your subject.

MILVERTON. Does it frighten you?

ELLESMERE. No, not a bit—a fine extent of dark ground to work our picture of life upon. Besides, I have never read anything about it worth reading. I do not speak contemptuously: there may be good books upon the subject, but I have never seen them. And I remember, too, having routed up the matter a good deal for the 'compulsory manumission' case. A great case that; nearly the greatest I ever was in.

MILVERTON. I am very glad indeed that you take so kindly to the subject. I was afraid I should have a good deal of coaxing and driving to get you over the first start, as with a young horse.

ELLESMERE. Considering what I have gone

through in the way of listening to essays of yours : how attentive I have always been when you have sat down there and told me that Virtue was a fine thing, I do not think you can fairly compare me to a young horse, but rather to one who has carried many a dull load in a most good-natured, pack-horse fashion.

MILVERTON. Dull the load I am about to share with you is not : sad to the uttermost it is. I have of late been looking with some care into the history of slavery, pondering over some of those Spanish tomes which had not escaped your observant eye, Ellesmere ; and the stories they tell are much darker and sadder, I think, even than the usual run of history. I have not been able to escape their influence, after laying them aside.

DUNSFORD. Yes ; I have noticed you have not been very conversable lately.

MILVERTON. However, I had the other day a strange dream or fancy which seemed an answer to some of my troubled questionings.

ELLESMERE. I see in these wild parts of the country the love of the marvellous still abides. Come, let us hear about the dream. Like all people who have anything strange to tell, you are longing to tell it, I can see.

MILVERTON. I will then. There is a beautiful creature haunts these hills; whether to call it insect, fly, or moth, I hardly know; but it is about so long, has a slender body which two transparent blue wings arch over, like a tent, and the delicate feelers form the cordage of the tent. This creature, (I believe it to be always the same one,) comes often when I light my lamp, and suns itself in the light thrown by the lamp upon the white wall near. It never falls with a whiz into the flame, like others of its winged tribe, but contentedly reposes on its lamp-warmed spot.

ELLESMERE. This will be a night-mare story.

MILVERTON. Two or three days ago, I was much tired, and began to set about my work very listlessly, but spurring myself up to it, at last made a beginning. I was busy with an account of wars, and destructions, and massacres; and I dare say, occasionally dropped some words which showed what I was thinking of. My patient blue-coloured friend had, I remember, taken her station on the wall when I first sat down. I thought how we built our palaces and formed our pleasure-gardens on the ruins of the past; and what part those unfortunate men, or nations, might still have in our gains, upon

whom the advance of human society seems to have been worked out with especial signs of agony and terror. Pondering these things, I suppose I slept; at any rate, the tented moth said suddenly to me with a clear crisp voice, sounding as if the words came through the finest net-work, 'Large, sad-coloured creature, I could speak to you of many things not to be found in those dark characters you rest upon.'

'Beautiful daughter of a day,' I answered, 'you are pleased to mock me, but so you speak with that sweet voice, speak on.'

'Say, daughter of long ages, as well as daughter of a day,' she, rustling, replied; 'for it is not with us as with you: at our birth the experience and the knowledge of our insect parents and of their parents come to us at once: we look back upon a web of continuous life which your histories only give you names about.'

'This, then, is their 'instinct,' I said to myself, but would not say it to her; thinking, in the strange way of reasoning that goes on in dreams, that she would not understand the word, 'instinct.'

She continued, 'Nor are we the only creatures gifted with this life on life: your large-shadowed race wonders to see an animal or bird

fondly attach itself to this man, not alluring it, and fly the other, offering all it wishes : but they know the lineage of those who have loved their race : a host of loving little words and deeds and pleasant memories attend the offspring of such a race. Nay, I myself have seen what your poets scarcely dare to feign, the inferior animal seek injury to itself at the hands of one of you men, to stop his rapid course to irredeemable evil, hoping to detain him by pity of its own distress.'

'Forgive the question, lady-moth,' I asked, 'but was the sacrifice successful?'

'The race,' she said, 'that walks upright and casts large shadows is as our coarser brethren the common moths, borrowing small wisdom save from experience, nor much from that.

'But listen to me of the past. For those dark days dimly pointed out before you on that page, I look along the line of ancestral memories, and feel that I was there myself, not as in these gentle climes, soft-coloured, but dusky, and having something of the fierceness of the sun that bred me there. Fast have I flown before the heated blast of some burnt Indian village, rolling towards the woods; stealthily

have I flitted round the trembling torch borne by the false Indian maid coming to warn her Spanish lover that her people gathered even now upon their destroyers; and quietly, as at this moment, have I basked in the light of the lamp where the Spanish captain sat in his tent writing to his sovereign to tell him how the Indians would not love the Christian faith—and often since have I sat by lamps making the pale student's face look paler, and heard them murmuring such thoughts as yours.'

'Gracious lady-moth of many ages,' I interrupted, 'tell me of these things—speak to me more.'

'I showed thee,' she replied, 'that other creatures were bound by links thou didst not dream of; and seemed it not to thee, there may be some bond of love and knowledge throughout thy race, the race that chooses; something that makes the present a brotherhood; the future a linked hope; the past an endless pity, poured by the whole race like balsam on the wounds and sorrows of those who bled and suffered for it most: and compared to which present human sympathy is but as nothing?'

And as she spoke with eagerness, a light quivering motion ran along her wings, as upon

a tent stirred by the first breeze before sun-rise. I looked more earnestly at her, and awoke. She seemed to me as usual, fastened to the wall in her quiet way. I began my work again. Many times I looked up from it, but she sat there unmoved: and before I had finished, she was gone.

DUNSFORD. I assure you, Ellesmere, our friend here is highly favoured; I have rarely seen this beautiful insect which, as I dare say you know is of the species—

MILVERTON. Forgive me for interrupting you, Dunsford; but please do not tell me the name. I do not want to know it. It will be some harsh-sounding scientific name, I dare say; but if I only associate in thought such a name with her beautiful presence, she may never bask near me any more.

ELLESMERE. You may tell me the name, Dunsford. The insects never talk to me.

LUCY.

‘In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.’

MILVERTON. I must now begin.

ELLESMERE. Yes, that formidable roll of paper

warns us that we must not talk much before the reading, if we mean to have any discussion afterwards.

Milverton then read the following essay.

SLAVERY.

THERE are many modes of dividing this subject. Slavery might be treated historically, tracing it from the earliest ages through the various nations in which it has existed, and which it has tended to destroy. As the general polity of Judea was unlike that of Greece; and that of Greece unlike that of Rome; so the state of slavery was widely different in each of these nations. In modern times, too, slavery presents various aspects, according to the nation in which it is found. The slavery amongst the Africans themselves is not like the slavery amongst civilized men. Brazilian slavery must differ in many respects from North American; that of the Eastern from that of the Western world.


The best modes moreover of dealing with slavery must largely differ in different places: and in truth each nation where slavery exists,

requires the subject to be treated with a view to the local and historical peculiarities of slavery in that nation.

Again, the subject might be treated as one of political economy; and doubtless this presents one of its important aspects. Or, it might be considered in reference to political welfare generally, and looked at mainly in its effects on national well-being.

I prefer dividing the subject in what may be deemed an arbitrary method, but one which might naturally be adopted in addressing an individual—an individual slave-owner for instance. I shall endeavour to show that slavery is cruel, needless, unauthorized, mischievous to master as well as slave; that there are no races in respect to which the preceding propositions do not apply; and, finally, that slavery can be done away. If these things can be shown to any slave-owner, I think he ought to listen, and I think he will. After all, men are swayed by argument: they do acknowledge the supreme authority of reason. It may be said—look at the course of the world: where is your force of reason there? I answer, the truths of reason are darkened by sophism, blunted by exaggeration, and when ‘immersed in matter,’ as they

must be in dealing with human affairs, there is a haziness and many-sidedness about them which render them very hard to apprehend. But bring them well out, and men must obey them. Self-interest, passion, pride, everything goes down ultimately before sound reasoning. You may deny reason: you may deny the Sun. You cannot, however, even when blind, escape the genial influence of either. Hence the first of all things, in a great cause, is to reason it out well. When it is securely reasoned, it is gained. There remains much to be done by the head and by the hand, with the tongue and with the pen; and there may be many partial issues of success and defeat: but superior intelligences, if such regard mortal affairs, would know that the work was, spiritually speaking, done. Now I do not mean to magnify any literary attempt in this matter, much less my own, but simply to state my conviction of how the work is to be done. Only by profound and earnest investigation, which will lead in writing or action to enlightened and earnest endeavour. The unspeakable misery which has been caused by partial and purblind efforts in the cause of slavery, makes one approach this subject with a feeling of awe, lest one should be adding any




more crude ideas, to be worked out in practical suffering upon other people.

Philanthropy, often as blind as allegorical Justice, can seldom make a single right step without the guidance of wide-seeing thoughtfulness. It may hereafter be proved that England has occasionally committed great errors of judgment in her endeavours to put down slavery and the slave-trade. Yet, even if it should be so, we must not forget that the concern felt among the British people for the question of slavery, has doubtless been one of the main supports to all philanthropic endeavour in the matter. This concern may often have been wrong directed for a time; but, without it, all interest in the subject might have died away. Wishing that, throughout Christendom, this interest may approach in enlightenment, what it already is in sincerity and fervour, I will now begin the more formal discussion of the subject.

I. THAT SLAVERY IS CRUEL.

Some may think this too obvious to need proof. But the danger is, that men's attention may have been dulled by many statements tending one way, which have not however been



brought to converge to any conclusion in their minds. Besides, after hearing much respecting any great evil, the world begins to think that it has heard chiefly the salient points on one side, and that there may be another view of the matter, which has not been brought forward, or which has not had its due weight. Then, again, if the subject be one of immense magnitude, like the present, the largeness of the evil oppresses men's minds, and makes them anxious, in self-defence, to get quit of the subject, or to be content with very vague impressions about it. It is necessary, therefore, in any connected essay on slavery, to recur to the evidence of its cruelty, to endeavour to arrange the evidence of this cruelty in some order, and to estimate fairly its extent.

But first we may ask what should we predicate of slavery, if we knew nothing minutely about it? Should we not say, that when once man was subject to man, as an animal is subject, he would shrink away into mere animal nature? Should we not expect to hear of chains and stripes, of physical brutality of all kinds? Without any history of slavery, should we not divine, from the conduct of free men to each other, that no man was fitted for absolute power? And if we turned

from political to domestic life, should we not say, that, the smaller the sphere in which absolute power prevailed, the greater would be the danger of its being abused? If we then considered that in a system of slavery, absolute power would be delegated not only to men, but to women and children, should we think it less of an evil on that account? Again, if we heard that in this imaginary state, the slaves outnumbered the free-men, could we doubt that cruel precautions would often be taken to avert the dangers of insurrection? And, in fine, if we were told that the slaves differed in race and colour from their owners, should we not conjecture that this circumstance would add disgust to cruelty, and darken injustice with loathing?

Now let us see what has happened.

For the present, I omit saying anything about the treatment of slaves amongst the Jews. That treatment is often adduced to justify the modern treatment. It is not for its supposed mildness that it is adduced.

The Greeks, with the exception of the Spartans, are considered to have treated their slaves mildly. We find, however, that two of the worst things which are ever connected with slavery prevailed in Greece. These are the inequality

of the numbers of male and female slaves, an inequality maintained for the same reason as in some modern nations, that it was cheaper to buy than to rear slaves: and the evidence of slaves being always taken with torture. The slaves in the mines worked in chains, and died in great numbers.


With respect to the treatment of slaves under the Romans, I cite the following passage from an elaborate work on the subject: *

‘The law allowed vast latitude to masters; and they availed themselves of it to the utmost. A blow with the hand was the readiest mode of expressing displeasure; but the lash and the rod were most frequently employed for domestic correction, and as *stimuli* to activity. If a slave spoke, coughed, or sneezed, at forbidden times, he was flogged by a very severe master. The toilet of a lady of fashion was a terrific ordeal for her tirewomen, who suffered for each curl unbecomingly arranged, and were punished for the faults of the mirror. Whips and thongs of hide or leather, were kept hanging up, as a terror

* *An Inquiry into the state of Slavery amongst the Romans*, by WILLIAM BLAIR, 1833, p. 106-113.

to offenders, and a ready means of vengeance; but were not the only or least dreadful instruments of flagellation. We are not informed what number of blows or lashes was usually inflicted for particular misdeeds. Petronius presents a master, threatening with one hundred lashes, any slave who should be guilty of leaving the house during an entertainment. This was, no doubt, meant to appear an excessive chastisement for the offence; yet, in a subsequent age, three hundred lashes was, often, the amount of punishment awarded, for very trifling faults, which, more generally, drew down a sentence of between thirty and fifty stripes. Fetters and chains were much used, for punishment or restraint, and were, in some instances, worn by slaves during life, through the sole authority of their masters. Porters at the gates of the rich, were generally chained. We can scarcely suppose, that this usage obtained, from a wish to make a needless display of power: it may have been adopted, as a mode of punishment, or to insure the constant presence of the slave at his post. Field labourers worked for the most part, in irons, posterior to the first ages of the Republic.'

A larger view of the subject may be obtained



by considering the laws passed by successive emperors to improve the condition of slaves.

‘The master’s power of life and death over his slaves, was first sought to be legally abolished, by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. Before the existence of laws sufficient to repress the excessive tyranny of slave-owners, extraordinary steps were taken by Augustus, and by Hadrian, to mark their reprobation of the odious barbarity with which slaves were, in some instances, treated. The reproof given, by the former of those Princes, to Vedius Pollio, for condemning a slave to a horrid death, on account of accidental mischief, is well known ; and the latter emperor banished a lady of rank, because she was notoriously cruel to her slaves. Constantine placed the wilful murder of a slave with that of a freeman, and expressly included the case of a slave who died under punishment, unless that was inflicted with the usual instruments of correction. But the effect of this humane rule, was done away by an after enactment of Constantine himself, and the more unfavourable law was retained in the Theodosian code. And in the fifth century, Salvianus assures us, that, in the Gallic provinces at least, men still fancied they had a right to put their

slaves to death. Several councils of the church endeavoured to repress slave murders, by threatening the perpetrators with temporary excommunication; at least, Justinian rejected from his code the less humane, and preserved the other of Constantine's decrees, which we have noticed. By a law of Claudius, a master who exposed his sick or infirm slaves, forfeited all rights over them, in the event of their recovery; and the same consequences followed the exposure of infant slaves. The Petronian law (passed A. U. C. 813,) prohibited masters from compelling their slaves to fight with wild beasts. Hadrian restrained a proprietor from selling his slave to a keeper of gladiators (*lanista*) or to a pander, (*leno*) except as a punishment; and then, only with the sanction of the judge. Till a late era, the ties of affection and of blood, among slaves, were not saved from arbitrary disregard, by any law introduced for the good of the servile classes. We meet, indeed, with some traces of a feeling against the separation of the members of servile families, at an earlier date, but no positive legislative enactments on the subject were issued, prior to several humane rules established by Constantine.*

* BLAIR'S *Inquiry*, p. 85.


Passing from these ancient times, when men's hearts were hardened by paganism, we have to see whether a religion of acknowledged love and mercy has eradicated the cruelty of masters to slaves. Doubtless it has mitigated it: and even amongst the Romans, we may note the power of the church coming in to aid the slave, and may fairly expect that her influence will always tend that way. Still though it has met, it has by no means mastered, the cruelty which, except in rare instances, is so apt to grow up, wherever man possesses an absolute property in his fellows. I shall not attempt to trace the cruelties attendant upon slavery in the middle ages. Suffice it to say, that slavery gradually tapered down to serfdom, and then by degrees expanded into freedom. At this period, from the beginning of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century, there was a lull. Then, as occasionally in modern times, the complacent historian might think of sitting down and writing the decline and fall of slavery; but all the while the evil had been but sweeping and garnishing its house, and was to return with sevenfold vehemence to take up its abode again with men.

A new career for slavery was suddenly opened

by the discovery of America. It would not be behindhand with the other continents in its experience of human suffering: nor the pestilence of slavery, unlike its brethren, be least fatal in the west. Las Casas and Vieyra might be quoted to show the cruelties which stimulated them in their unwearied efforts to save the original inhabitants from servitude. The Indians vanished from the scene, giving way to a more enduring race, who were thenceforward fated to monopolize the miseries of slavery. The evidence on which the British people abolished slavery, and other nations the slave-trade, might now be adduced. But as it must have been of the same character as that of quite recent times, we need not enter upon it.

To come then at once to modern times. And here, whether we take the laws, the general statistics, or the individual facts related by travellers, the conclusion, we must arrive at, is the same. The same, too, as regards all countries where slavery exists, though of course there are many modifications. The slaves are uneducated, here from policy, there from neglect: and social relations are everywhere ruthlessly sundered.

A poor free man of colour with a slave wife and four children says, pointing to the only



white passenger in company with the traveller from whom I quote:

‘If my boys were like that lad, I should be as happy as a king. Is not your wife free then? I asked. No, was his reply. I wish she were. We live together at present, and our children with us—All but one, whom her master has taken away. The fact was, the owner of this poor creature had had the meanness to saddle her husband with the cost of maintaining the children, and even allowed him to pay the poll-tax upon them—amounting to about a dollar and a half a year each, including the state and the town tax. As the children become valuable for work or sale, he will claim them; and the father may look in vain for compensation.’*

The planters themselves must perceive this evil:

‘He (a planter) replied, that he himself was a lawyer by profession, and that no legal validity ever had been, or ought to be given, to the marriage tie, so long as the right of sale could separate parent and child, husband and wife.

* *ABDY's Journal*, 1833-4, vol. ii. p. 353.

Such separations, he said, could not always be prevented, when slaves multiplied fast, though they were avoided by the masters as far as possible. He defended the custom of bringing up the children of the same estate in common, as it was far more humane not to cherish domestic ties among slaves.*

Another traveller in the United States, whose name is well known wherever the English language is, says:

‘In the negro car belonging to the train in which we made this journey, were a mother and her children who had just been purchased; the husband and father being left behind with their old owner. The children cried the whole way, and the mother was misery’s picture. The person who had bought them, rode in the same train; and every time we stopped, got down to see that they were safe.’†

That social relations are sundered, is too well known to require proof from the above extracts, but individual instances represent to our minds the force of general facts.


* LYELL’S *Travels in North America*, vol. i. p. 184.

† DICKENS’S *American Notes*, vol. ii. p. 17.

The personal treatment of slaves is almost everywhere too rigorous. It is said, and justly, that in estimating this matter, we must take into account the punishments inflicted on criminals in free states.* The nature, however, of the discipline in the two cases is so different, that any comparison of quantity must fail to represent the truth. It was justly complained of in the Roman times, that slaves were fiercely punished for small offences; but for great ones, for which they might have forfeited their lives (those lives being so much money to their owners) they went scot-free. So that even if the amount of physical suffering were the same in the punishment of criminals in free states and the discipline of slaves in slave states, the amount of good result in the case of the slaves, might be much less; of bad result, much greater. But this is not the gist of the case. Draconian laws are bad: but they are laws, and not individual caprice. Moreover, in European life,

* If we could fairly estimate the misery of all offenders in the prisons, penitentiaries, and penal settlements of some large European province, and then deduct the same from the sufferings of the slaves in a large Southern State of the Union, the excess alone ought, in fairness, to be laid to the charge of the slave-owners. LYELL's *Travels in North America*, vol. i. p. 190.

punishment is the exception ; it is not connected with a man's daily work, except amongst convicted criminals. But from the nature of slavery, productiveness being the merit of a slave, his most frequent punishment will be connected with his daily work. His fear will therefore be continuous. And it is the fear of punishment which in his case will be the greatest injury—a continuous fear of punishment depending upon individual will. What is there in the punishment of free criminals which can be compared to that? This fear, too, comes upon the whole race, good and bad. Again, where domestic service is the portion of a slave, it is still more hopeless for him by any conduct, however watchful, to escape punishment. For the duties of domestic service, being of a mixed and uncertain character, will often be said to be performed well or ill, according to the present good or bad temper of those in domestic authority. And fearful will be the evil when such authorities have an excessive and immediate power of punishment. Therefore, even if it could be proved, that the amount of physical suffering, endured by the criminals of some European state, were greater than that endured by the slaves in a slave state, it would be but a most fallacious



test in favour of slavery. The freeman comes under the whip; the slave has it always hanging over him. The honest man in this or any other free country does not think about punishments; no lash is resounding in his ears. Personal fears are not the wages that make him work. You hear some men say, in hasty argumentation, that the poor man in a highly populated country, who is dependent for his daily subsistence upon work being given to him by some superior, is almost a slave. But between that 'almost' and the reality lie the possible extremes of civilization and barbarism. And the difference both in the grounds and in the mode of their respective punishments is one of the items of difference between the freeman and the slave, large enough in itself to make such a contrast in character between them, that let them be descended from the same stock, in a generation or two the family resemblance would, I believe, be lost from this one circumstance alone.

But to proceed with details, one who says that he was an eye-witness of what he relates, states that he had seen a black man receive, at the 'whipping-post no less than one hundred lashes from the cow-hide, for striking a white

man who had treated him most barbarously. He had struck the latter with his open hand. For this crime his back was cut nearly to the bone, from the nape of the neck to the loins, and presented one continuous mass of gore.*

The author of the *Journal* before quoted from calls at the houses of some free blacks, and finds in one of them a negro said to be 114 years old.

‘He had retained his faculties, and was strong enough to walk without assistance; though his feet were much crippled by the sufferings he had undergone: having been compelled, for six years, to drag a weight of fifty-six pounds, attached by a chain to his legs, while at work. In addition to this instrument of wearisome annoyance, he had worn an iron collar round his neck, fastened to his waist, and projecting over his head, with a bell suspended from the upper part. He was a very religious man; and it was for preaching to his fellow-slaves, that these excruciating tortures were inflicted upon him. When we asked him if he had ever been flogged, he threw his arms up wildly, and seemed to labour under an oppressive load of recollec-

* See Abdy, vol. ii. p. 242.


tions. This was invariably his custom, when the subject was recalled to his mind. Yes! he exclaimed, the cow-hide was my breakfast, and dinner, and supper.'

My object in quoting the last two extracts is not so much for the sake of the cruelty exhibited, as to indicate the disproportion between the crime and the punishment which will be likely to exist where slavery prevails. In such an abnormal state, things in themselves harmless, indifferent, praiseworthy, or slightly wrong, will be considered by the ruling powers, and almost unavoidably so, as crimes of magnitude and full of danger.

From the accounts of the numerous travellers who have visited the United States within the last few years, it would not be difficult to select instances of various kinds of cruelty which is the result of slavery. Amongst such instances, those would be justly conspicuous which illustrated the feeling of caste, that feeling which, as Coleridge has pointed out, is the origin of the word unkindness; and which adds the difficulty of overcoming disgust to the difficulties already sufficient in the exercise of charity to those dependent upon us. It might also be shown how

soon those persons who have no rights by law come to be considered and treated as animals, or things. But it is a most ungracious task to dwell upon instances of cruelty, and I am anxious not to do so the least more than is needful; it often appears a magnifying of individual instances; it cannot be so needful in a country where the question of slavery is already much agitated and where the press is free; and, moreover, I have a feeling that those black and white races will yet live amicably and wisely together; and that it will be a great pity to place upon record more than is necessary of circumstances which might hereafter aggravate the feelings of either.

Before quitting this part of the subject as regards America, I may remark that there is evidence to show, what may already have occurred to the minds of my readers, that kind treatment from his master must often fill the slave, if he has any thoughtfulness, with great concern about the future. Surely, no change that occurs in the vicissitudes of civilized life can equal the misery of going from a humane master to a cruel one; and few anticipations can be more unwelcome.



We have not much evidence about the Portuguese colonies in Africa, but what we have is sufficient to show that the treatment of slaves is much the same there as elsewhere.

‘Here (Novo Redondo) they often send a slave into the interior for many weeks, to purchase ivory and slaves. I happened to be in the house of an Italian, when one of these traders returned, after an absence of three weeks, and gave an account of the business which he had transacted; the reckoning was made out with the aid of small beans, but the accounts did not exactly tally, and the poor slave was dragged into the court-yard, where he was whipped, and then fastened by a chain on his arm to the wall, where he remained without shelter, till he could be sent by the first opportunity across the sea. Deeply did I regret, that it was not in my power to place the inhuman judge in the situation of his unfortunate slave.’*

Again the same traveller tells us†

‘I had scarcely been in possession of my new

* See TAMS'S *Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. i. p. 201.

† Ibid. p. 252.

lodgings for an hour, and was occupied in arranging my effects, when my attention was suddenly attracted by the sound of stripes, repeated at regular intervals. I soon perceived that some person was undergoing corporal chastisement in the court-yard, and at once hastened to the lady of the house; I found her sitting as usual at the open window, enjoying the cool sea-breeze and the fine prospect of the harbour, while a young negress was busily engaged in needle-work at her side. To my anxious inquiry, respecting the loud beating which still continued, she replied smiling, that one of her needle women was receiving by her orders, six dozen palmetadas (blows in the palm of the hand) because her stitches were badly made. My indignation and disgust being excited in the highest degree, Donna Catarina was induced to send the other girl to the court-yard, with orders that the punishment should be discontinued.'

In the same house

'To the very last moment, three or four of the youngest slaves sat on the ground in the adjoining apartment, waiting in case they should be summoned, and ever on the watch, to pick up

anything that might fall upon the floor. If the unhappy little things, from four to eight years of age, were unable to resist the influence of sleep, the application of the usual remedy was not delayed for a moment, and the last sound which was daily heard in that house, was the wail of these poor young children.'

The state of the slaves in Cuba forms no exception to the general rule.

'The mistress of many a great family in the Havanna will not scruple to tell you that such is the proneness of her people to vice and idleness, she finds it necessary to send one or more of them once a month to the whipping post, not so much on account of any positive delinquency, as because without these periodical advertisements the whole family would become unmanageable, and the master and mistress would lose their authority.'*

The proportion of males to females is, we are told, nearly three to one. But that is not all.

'It is notorious that there are individual

* See *Travels in the West, Cuba; with notices of Porto Rico; and the slave trade*, by DAVID TURNBULL, 1840, p. 54.

estates in islands with 600 or 700 negroes upon them, from which the softer sex is entirely excluded. In this respect I am bound to say that the Creole proprietors evince much more regard for the laws of humanity than the emigrant planters from Spain and the United States.'

The same traveller then speaks of an estate where the owner, an American, 'has congregated no less than 700 male negroes, to the exclusion of a single female, locking up the men, during the short period allowed for needful rest, in a building called a barracoon, which is in fact, to all intents and purposes, a prison.'*

The loss of life amongst the negroes in Cuba, amounts, on estates where sugar is grown, 'to the appalling proportion of ten per cent. per annum, or cent. per cent. per decade, thus inferring the necessity of a total renewal of the numbers by importation in the course of the ten years.'†

This loss will not be wondered at, when we find that in the crop season 'only four hours, or

* Ibid. p. 146.

† Ibid. p. 150.

at most four hours and a half out of the twenty-four were allowed for sleep.*

As regards education, we have the authority of a Cuban priest for saying that

. 'A field negro was never in church in the whole course of his life, except at the time of his baptism. If the Ingenio or the Cafetal happened to be close to a town, a few favoured individuals might be allowed to go there when the crop season was over, but never by any chance, or under any circumstances, during the busy period of the year.'†

It would not be difficult, I am sure, to find many instances of humane masters in all the countries we have been referring to; but I have scarcely found anything which would support the idea that slaves, as a class, are kindly treated except, perhaps, an instance like the following which occurs in Africa itself.

'Mahriam, the slave-girl, who sat with the rest, was not neglected, for a larger portion came to her share than to any of the others. Slaves generally are considered by their owners in the

* Ibid. p. 286.

† Ibid. p. 25.

light of near relations, or rather, perhaps, as foster children. When their conduct is so very bad as to alienate the affection of their indulgent masters, they are not unfrequently dismissed.*

Even here, however, we see what is likely to happen from the fatal temptation of slave-trading, for the same traveller who gives the above account, adds:

‘Latterly, however, a greater relaxation in the principles of the Christians at Shoa, as in other portions of Abyssinia, has led to a punishment for refractory slaves, by selling them to their Mahomedan neighbours, who soon forward them to the coast. Canon-law prohibits this custom of selling slaves altogether, but a system of smuggling in this unhappy commodity is extensively carried on, by the very priests of the religion itself, who are continually bringing slave children to Aliu Amba from Gurague, and other christian states to the south of Shoa.’

We have now gone over some of the principal points connected with the treatment of slaves. It is true that they have not the care for their

* JOHNSTON'S *Travels in Southern Abyssinia*, vol. ii. p. 176.

means of livelihood which belongs to necessitous free men. The domestic animals enjoy a similar absence of care. But in all other respects obviously, and as much perhaps, in this freedom from care if we did but see the full effect of it, I think we can have but little hesitation in pronouncing that slavery is cruel. In saying this, we need come to no uncharitable conclusion respecting slave-owners, or assume for a moment that they are, originally, more hard-hearted than other men. But the truth is, none of us are fitted to own slaves—much less are people who are brought up from childhood as masters in a slave household.

To many of those living in the midst of any system, however bad, much that is said of it by strangers must seem a great coil about nothing. We can hardly fancy that what we have been long accustomed to can be otherwise than absolutely right. Then, too, although those who look at a mode of life from without, may see wisely into it, being able to compare it with other things, yet, on the other hand, they naturally fall into some errors in detail which could not be made by those who are engaged in that way of living. The traveller makes just and far-seeing remarks, perhaps, on the political position, geo-

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graphical relations, manners, or general aspect of some town; but the inhabitants of the place mostly find something to laugh at in his description of details. They know every street, and make no minor mistakes. And then, again, if they can find no flaw which renders the observer of their ways an insufficient observer in their eyes, there are other things which may make them pay too little heed to his remarks. It is hard to profit by the wisdom which is unpalatable to us and which comes to us in a matter that we are so versed in that we do not see it. Here then we must hope most from men of genius and imagination which take a man, as it were, out of himself. We think much of foreseeing people; but there is no foresight without insight, and it may be an easier thing to judge wisely of the future than to look clearly into the present and the near. The man who bred up in the midst of slavery sees all the mischief of it could do the most against it. And let us hope that many such men will be found to enlighten and purify the public opinion around them. If not, there is no assurance against the cruelties we have been describing hardening more and more into a system. People began the slave-trade upon the theory of its being 'a commerce for

the ransom of slaves, or for the making converts to Christianity.' We now find that a slave is openly called a 'bulto de effectos,'* or bale of goods, and has come to be considered rather as a thing than a person in all slave-owning parts.

But whether those in the midst of slavery perceive the evils or not, it is impossible for any unprejudiced person to be dead to the magnitude of those evils. And the cruelty of it is most likely in the first instance to awaken attention. War is a horrible thing. We read a surgeon's description of a battle-field, or trace the famines, pestilences, and desolation that attend on armies, and can then form some notion of what war is. But there is no denying that good may come from it. Civilization has been extended by it. Even those apparently preposterous Crusades introduced the barbaric Northerners to the arts and sciences of Southern and Eastern climes. Races

* The Captain said, in answer to the observations and accusations that were made against him, 'that there were about 100 bales embarked at your port infected with the putrid fever, and that all the precautions that we could use on board did not suffice to stop the mortality; so that we may say only half have been saved of the number that ought to have been yielded by the abundant and well assorted barter put on board, calculated to produce more than 400 bultos.—TURNBULL'S *Travels in the West, Cuba, &c.* p. 423.

And it may be doubted whether Charles the Fifth, when in his retreat at the monastery of St. Justus, meditated much upon his Indian legislation. Deeply penitent, we are told, for many errors he had committed in the way of non-persecution, he probably thought little of his permission for the import of Negroes to his new-found states, or of the causes which led to that import being needed. Yet the Inquisition itself was to dwindle down into harmlessness, Spain to sink into comparative insignificance, all his European policy to count for little: while this new growth of slavery was to be the scourge of nations, and the enduring perplexity of the wisest men.

DUNSFORD. Strike out that word, 'enduring,' Milverton; endure it cannot, endure it shall not.

ELLESMERE. Well done, my dear Dunsford! I have seen for some time that you have been at boiling point, quite ready to go out in a boat by yourself and attack a slaver (some one did the other day); or to set up an academy for Negro boys in a slave state, perhaps the more dangerous thing of the two.

MILVERTON. Have I dwelt too long upon the cruelty?

ELLESMERE. For me you have. But then I was brought up amongst the defenders of slavery; and the facts which used to come out in a quiet way, quite convinced me of the opposite to what my friends used to argue fiercely for. And their arguments did something in the same way too.

MILVERTON. I know the impatience of modern readers, but I cannot proceed in a subject of this magnitude without a large stratum of facts.

ELLESMERE. People can use in this chapter what some man has called the first privilege of Englishmen—that of skipping. By the way, imagine a nation condemned to read books through!

DUNSFORD. Pray do not cut out any of the facts in this chapter. The length of it will not righten away anybody who is worth convincing. If people do not care enough about a subject to linger upon the details of it, their aid will be ignorant and their sympathy shallow. When we do care about anything or body, we do not know what it is to be tired with details about them.

ELLESMERE. Well, well, keep it all, if you like. I really believe I am not a fair judge the thing is self-evident to me. But I must say in general I like facts ; and seldom think we can have too many of them. But do not let us say any more at present about this part of the subject. I have a sort of sickness at heart after hearing so many horrors, though I am not as soft as Dunsford.

MILVERTON. I am in hopes that the locomotion of the present day will have some great effect upon the slavery question. Many more things are carried over land and water by those puffing steam engines, than are entered in the way-bill or the purser's book.

ELLESMERE. Yes, travelling is a grand thing. I don't mean your statistical, political, benevolent or scientific travelling, though that is often very serviceable. But I am thinking of travelling for one's self. Horace may say what he likes about care laying hold of the tow-rope of a steamer, or sitting behind the horseman like his master's coat strapped round a groom ; but a judicious traveller cuts the tow-rope or undoes the buckle, and care is obliged to drop off behind.

DUNSFORD. Very Horatian these similes !

ELLESMERE. Then the coming back is such a

delight. After a man has been beyond the Alps some time, there is absolutely a halo in his mind round the idea of parish business at home. But then he must have contrived to keep tolerably clear of letters.

MILVERTON. Yes, I have often thought I could make the fortune of a small German principality, by persuading the prince to forbid any English post coming in or going out. Then set up some mineral waters and a town with a queer name: it would be instantly overpowered with the best class of English visitors. Ministers of state would be sure to have frequent attacks of a peculiar disorder which nothing but the waters of this place could cure. You see, the beauty of the scheme would be, that there would be a complete excuse for not writing, as well as an impossibility of receiving letters.

ELLESMERE. Very good, certainly: but don't you think the wish to write letters would come directly letter-writing was forbidden.

MILVERTON. No; letter-writing is one of the few things you may safely forbid.

ELLESMERE. But what excuse should the prince have?

MILVERTON. Oh, English intrigue. Don't you know the general theory abroad of our deep-

laid schemes? To be sure there are about ten or twelve Englishmen (I should rather say ten) who care about foreign politics. But this droll theory of the foreigner is quite enough basis for my scheme.

ELLESMERE. Special messengers! a 'hurried Hudson'—how can you meet that?

MILVERTON. Ah, there is no such thing as perfection. But this principality would be the best thing that civilization could offer. Of course a man cannot be secure without making a Robinson Crusoe of himself.

ELLESMERE. There would be this good too. A man, seeing how well the world gets on without him, may just bethink himself whether he could not get on without the world. He may reflect that as it is not at all a slave to him, he need not be quite a slave to it. Of course all separation from the world tells this; but the more complete tells it the louder.

MILVERTON. There is another great merit of travelling: it does not enable men to impose upon the world. A travelled ass is never for a moment mistaken for a sensible man; a stupid pedant sometimes is.

ELLESMERE. Yes; for we think we can thoroughly judge about what anybody can tell

us of foreign travel, but the man who is skilled in Greek Iambics has got into a region where—I, for one, do not mean to follow him, and am ready at all hazards to pronounce him a sensible man rather than do so. Of course no knowledge gives sense or conversability in any high signification of the words. Neither travelled lore, nor Greek, nor even knowledge of life, if brought out upon us inopportunately, delights us.

MILVERTON. More than that,—the knowledge which is most delightful to others, is not that which a man takes out of his mind, as he would money out of his pocket (both having the impress of another head) but what he gives you stamped with his own nature—his own knowledge.

DUNSFORD. Not acquisition, but accretion.

ELLESMERE. Yet it will not do to put down knowledge too much, though obtained without originality, or clumsily made use of. Now I have no doubt that a foolish man does become decidedly a more conversable being by travel.

DUNSFORD. Yes, we have more topics in common with him, and he can enlighten us upon minute points. But we are thinking of something higher than this, when we talk of knowledge being made delightful to others.

MILVERTON. There is a very humble kind of

travelling which just suits me—going short distances and stopping at obscure country inns. Strange places they are: with odd rooms which the builder seems to have built by bits—now finishing one side and then considering what he should do next, and being a good deal guided by the humour he was in. Then the pictures—such as are to be seen nowhere else—actors and actresses whom we recollect our fathers raving about, but whose memory lives only at country inns now. Then a stray statesman who was a considerable man, supposed to be often walking up back stairs, in George the Third's time, but he also is now glorious only in the parlour of some inn. Beauties too, 'prints from Sir Joshua,' the 'honourable Mrs. ——.' The blank might be filled up now for aught that we should be the wiser.

ELLESMERE. Yes—Inns are the intermediate stage between notoriety and utter oblivion. The busy world has its new pets, but the old inn cannot afford to part with its old ones.

MILVERTON. Then the landlord and landlady, and the whole establishment indeed, except the two post horses who are fat, have seen better days. With what an air the host brings in the first dish—not unlikely to be the last also—to

show you that he knows how things are done, and can do them himself.

ELLESMERE. Then the books!

MILVERTON. Yes, a thumbed volume of some defunct critical journal which was the hope and terror of authors who wrote in wigs, or the *Rambler*, or the narrative of the landing of the French in Ireland, or some book that you would find nowhere else. The last time I was at a country inn, *the* book was a biography of prize-fighters. Sad chronicles they were, told with much earnestness; how Jim This was stout-hearted and skilful too, but thought he could do more than he could; and Tom That could have done anything but that he was too fond of something else; and Sam The Other who could beat all the world, had somebody at home whom he was more afraid of than all the world. It was very like reading of great conquerors and mighty kings, only that the names were shorter.

ELLESMERE. Let us have our next meeting at an inn.

MILVERTON. With all my heart.

DUNSFORD. Suppose we drive to ——— and stop at the first inn we come to.

ELLESMERE. Agreed. But now to return to the subject of the essay. After all, Milverton,

do you see so much to object to in being a slave? In freedom there is certain room to dash yourself against things, but it is small comfort to a man to think that he has made a great part of his own misery himself.

MILVERTON. Yet that must be the best education for another world in which there is some freedom for good and evil. If you begin discussing the matter with reference to happiness alone, you may as well take in the animal creation, and contend that they are better off than men. Suffering of all kinds is not without its instruction: but surely that suffering is most instructive, which a man has had something to do with in making for himself. Perhaps the worst state for man might be defined to be, not that which has most suffering, but that which has most suffering with the least instruction and discipline growing out of it.

DUNSFORD. I think you are answered, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. I wonder what a man would make of all his experience, if he could have it again for this world.

MILVERTON. M—— and I were saying the other day what a good work of fiction it would be of the 'St. Leon' school, to make a man live

over again, having an indistinct recollection of his former life, enough to give a warning sometimes.

ELLESMERE. I suppose he would gain something from his experience. He would at least tumble off on the other side. But I return to the charge, notwithstanding Dunsford says that I am defeated; and I ask, as I have asked before, how is it that all your geniuses and great men in general do not contrive to make themselves happier. Of course they are the foremost in freedom, and therefore I take them as the most conclusive examples. I know what you will both say against happiness, and, perhaps, I had better not keep to that word; but still I cannot help thinking, that there should be at least a serene order of mind in the greater intelligences. Now looking both at the past and the present, as far as my experience goes, I should say—what should I say?—at any rate it would not be anything very favourable to the said geniuses and great men, that is, to the first in the ranks of the free.

DUNSFORD. I do not admit that they are necessarily the first in the ranks of the free. The humble and the good are there.

MILVERTON. To go back to men of genius and great men, we happen to know some of their

lives pretty well. It has been truly said,* they are the only lives we do know well; and even tolerably clear water, exposed to a Drummond light, shows a great many pugnacious, horrid-looking animalculæ. Moreover, there are particular snares for men of genius. Their sympathies are wider than those of other men. They transact more life. The misery of the world has more room to play about in them. They were, perhaps, intended to have more evil to contend with than other men: that they might look into it, and express it, and thus help others to bear it. So best for them possibly, and so best for the world. At the same time it may be said that such men are by no one thing subdued. Their imaginations and their sympathies which admit much of life and life's worst struggles to them, create an outlet for such things to pass away from them. And say what you like, my dear Ellesmere, we should all of us rather have been so many Miltons, than so many slaves, though by chance the latter may have contrived to have got less misery out of their chains than he out of his freedom.

ELLESMERE. Well done—wound up with a

* By Sir Bulwer Lytton.

burst of enthusiasm addressed to the jury. But I give up for the present. Some day we shall know more about these things, especially if we can get that great desideratum in literature, the life of a perfectly common-place man—of a man whose life no man would think worth writing, but which might be the most so of all. However, I want to change my ground entirely. I am not sure but that what I should most object to in the minds of the great men I have been thinking of, is not an especial product of western civilization—a certain formal, restless, unresigned, self-tormenting, world-arranging disposition.

MILVERTON. What a number of adjectives to that one poor substantive! A most polygamic substantive!

ELLESMERE. But, without joking, you know I have always had some eastern tendencies; and cannot but think that we have great defects in our western views of life.

MILVERTON. D'Israeli, I declare.

ELLESMERE. It may be: I never care from whom I have an idea, so that I have it as my own. I have had this one a long time, as you know. I perceive something of what I admire and wish to have for the west, in other develop-

ments besides the eastern—occasionally in what we read of barbaric tribes. I have ventured before to hint that all that we take for civilization may not be so.

MILVERTON. I do not mean to say that it might not be well to look with attention to any wise and great ideas that there may be in the east: neither do I doubt that there is in every form of partial human development something that it may be well to preserve. Still, my dear fellow, what a gain it is, that in this western world we keep our hands off each other, and there are such things as property and law. But I am talking common-places to you.

ELLESMERE. Yes: these are very good things. We have only just got them, though. I was thinking rather of mental gains or losses—also of various social arrangements not altogether involved in property. But we will not talk any more about it just now. Some day or other I shall be able to show you what I mean. What are you laughing at, Miss Lucy?

LUCY. I am only picturing to myself Mr. Ellesmere as a native of the east, reclining upon gorgeous pillows, smoking, and watching an interminable eastern dance.

MILVERTON. Both beautiful things. The

delight of smoking, I should think, must be to see the vapour 'fold and swim,' as Tennyson says. These vaporous forms are the very poetry of motion : and as for dancing, it is to me the most beautiful thing in the world when it is supremely done. People go into ecstasies about pictures—

ELLESMERE. I wish nine-tenths of the pictures that have been painted had never been preserved: it is such a nuisance having to go and see them. Proceed.

MILVERTON. I was going to say that people go into ecstasies about things that are intended to represent the beautiful, (and which oftentimes do), but they will not see the beauty around them.

DUNSFORD. You do not see that trying to represent beauty teaches us to see what beauty is—makes us alive to it. No people see so much beauty in every-day life as great artists.

MILVERTON. That is true, I dare say.

LUCY. But what were you going to say, Mr. Milverton, about dancing? for that is what you were coming to, and it is a subject which Mr. Ellesmere will kindly allow us ladies to have some interest in.

MILVERTON. Merely that I could watch it from morning till night, if it were good.

ELLESMERE. So could not I. I would rather

see the beauty of an intricate law case, any day. You laugh. You chuckled over those people who could see beauty only in pictures: but you cannot imagine the beauty of an intricate, mazy law process, embodying the doubts and subtleties of generations of men. I say, looked at in that way, there is something picturesque in an Act of Parliament.

MILVERTON. Well, you are now certainly making fun of us: and, indeed, you have been very paradoxical throughout the conversation. Not but what there may be an exquisite beauty of form in any well-arranged intellectual performance, from Acts of Parliament, up to the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*.

DUNSFORD. How Miltonic we have been to-day! But touching this dancing, you do not approve, Milverton, of operatic performances? I shall really be scandalized if you do.

MILVERTON. Approve of them! For the most part, I loathe them—more, if possible, from their ugliness than their impropriety. The dancers, poor things, with perseverance worthy of a better cause, being made into wretched, distorted, spinning machines of ugliness—the dance itself showing at the best a laboured intrepidity of indecorum—the whole of the upper

part of the body being left undeveloped, while the unfortunate legs are exercised unceasingly from morning to night, like a great scholar—

ELLESMERE. Who has only the Greek-getting-up part of his mind developed, and is in other respects an utter blockhead.

DUNSFORD. Where, then, have you seen any such dancing as would at all come up to your ideal? Is there such a thing?

ELLESMERE. Why, we have all forgotten, Dunsford, that here is a man who has seen boleros and fandangos danced by the people who invented them. Let us forthwith form ourselves into a committee of inquiry upon this matter; and, calling Milverton before us, let us at once command that specimens of Spanish dancing be presented to us. Witness, what is a bolero?

MILVERTON. A thing of great beauty and condescending stateliness: if the Graces had been brought up in Spain, they might have danced it, which cannot be predicated, I think, of the dances on any other stage I know of. I should be but too happy to show you how it is danced, but it requires a partner.

ELLESMERE. Teach me.

MILVERTON. There are some teachers who

cannot teach what they know well, and some people who cannot be taught what they are very desirous to learn.

ELLESMERE. He talks like an old Greek philosopher to a stupid exoteric class.


MILVERTON. Well, I was going to tell you that it was not upon the stage, or amongst professors of the art, that I had seen the most beautiful dancing; but amongst peasants and artisans. There is a certain Spanish saint, called St. Isidro, a shepherd saint, the tutelary of Madrid, and much venerated by all classes in that city. I was there on his festal day, when all Madrid flocks out to his chapel, two or three miles from the town; and there, in family parties, the citizens have their dinners and recreate themselves. On the occasion that I was present at, the weather was perfect. It was emphatically a day: often in that Babel you laud so much at times, Ellesmere, the sun with all the good will in the world to do so, cannot make a day of it: and sorrowfully leaves eighteen hundred thousand persons unsustained by his life-giving rays. It needs for you to be very clever and very amusing people to make up for this.

ELLESMERE. If only the smoke were away, we should need none of your rustic pity.

MILVERTON. Well, as I said, it was a day. No iced wind from the neighbouring sierras came down upon us with the hot sun, making a combination, like a false man's kindness, to mock us. The air was warm and yet bracing. Altogether it was very hard for those who had to stay at home on that day. It was noon before I reached the place of concourse. The whole scene was like a fair,—not one of our coarse northern fairs, but the fair in a dream. Delightful bits of red and rich amber colour, which last the women much affect, came out amidst the colour of the fields and the corn. The whole length of the city overlooked the fields where the festival was kept.

I made my way through the crowd which pressed up to the saint's chapel, or which thronged about the tents for refreshment, and got out into the adjoining fields, where numbers of little parties were grouped about, some of whom were beginning to dance. All seemed happy. I suppose, though, there was the usual under-current of vexation: Juan absent from the little party where he was most longed for, and Beatriz not found in another which to some one was naught without her: or Catalina dancing coldly with Luis, to the heart-breaking of poor Pedro, who

looked on at a distance, but might not join them. But these things were not visible to the stranger. I stood for some time in the outer circle of several of these sets of dancers, in a large, hilly field of irregular shape. Looking suddenly at the top of the hill, I saw against the blue sky the figure of a young girl dancing beautifully. I made my way to the little home-party which this 'phantom of delight' belonged to. It was on the extreme outskirts of the throng. The girl was about twelve years old, and was dancing with one of her brothers, as I conjectured. I sat down by the blind fiddler who was playing to them, and looked on. A light breeze waved against our backs the corn of the neighbouring field divided from us by no hedge. But how shall I describe to you this girl and her dancing? She was dressed in the commonest dress, with no choiceness in its arrangement; having on coarse clouted shoes, and long loose garments. Her face I do not distinctly remember: it was certainly not beautiful, only earnest. But she danced in the most consummate manner you can conceive. It was the expression of the height of passionless joy, in the utmost grace of movement. She wanted no admiration, had no other foolish thoughts; but only said, as it were,



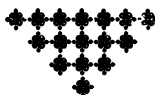
to the bystander 'I am very happy, and this is how I tell you so.' Her brother, a graceful, fine youth, better dressed than his sister, quitted the dance, and another brother succeeded. Still she danced on. She tired him out, too; and the first brother then came on a second time. But there was no weariness in her. She threw her hair off her face, and went on again. She had a spectator as untiring as herself, for, I believe, if she had continued dancing till now, I should have still been watching her.

DUNSFORD. And what did you think of all this time?

MILVERTON. Ah, well, I thought of many things. I thought how the girl's talent for dancing would be noticed, and she would be brought upon the stage: and then I fancied the proud disgust with which she would listen to the applause given to inferior dancers at the wrong place; and how, amidst the gilt-paper-triumphs of such a life, she would look back, perhaps, upon this very day with fondness as a really happy day. And then, I remember, I thought how little we understood pleasure, and how we crush the delicate thing in our clumsy efforts to hold it. And I looked up at the splendid palace of Madrid, and thought of regal

pomps and vanities. And then, how it was I know not, I thought of death. Perhaps anything very beautiful has that thought in the back-ground. But now the dance was stopped; the girl tripped off to fetch something; and the elders of the party moved away. I went also; and though I returned to the same place and sought afterwards in many other groups, I could not find again my beautiful dancer from the heart: nor, save in some auspicious dream, shall I see such dancing any more, I fear.

But let us go in: we have had so much talking and reading, at least I have, that I am quite tired.





CHAPTER II.

BEFORE we separated after the last reading, we agreed, if it were fine, to have our next meeting at an inn in a little town about eight miles distant. We met there on the appointed day, and after dinner, Milverton read to us the following section of his essay.

2. THAT SLAVERY IS NEEDLESS.

Many a reader who has been quite willing to agree to the first proposition 'that slavery is cruel,' and who may scarcely have had patience for much detail in reference to that part of the subject, has all the while been troubled with an ill-defined apprehension of the needfulness of slavery at least in certain cases.

But for whom is it needful? For the masters? If the superior race on earth could in no wise till the earth *from some physical inaptitude* (a race, for instance, of the present European con-

stitution, with nothing but rice-fields to work upon) and the races under them could till it, but would not work more than enough to support themselves in a brutish way, and for whom all the finer head-work and hand-work of the superior race had no attractions, there would then be a fair justification of the institution of slavery. But this hypothesis meets with no fulfilment in nature. There are millions of untried acres waiting for the Caucasian race, where they may work out their own institutions, without the drawback of slavery amongst them. And even if the hypothesis were founded on reality, though it would be right, in self-preservation, for the wiser race to compel the others to work for them, they would be bound at the same time to endeavour to elevate the character of the lower race, and to convert their forced service into brotherly aid. Our imaginary Caucasians would be bound to give their Helots a taste for the higher necessities of civilization, so as to make them in turn dependent upon Caucasian skill in the higher departments of life. Even in this extreme case, then, we might look for some termination to a state of slavery absolutely needful in the beginning. In real life there is no such need. The celebrated Vieyra in one of his sermons answers the people of Maranhão on this head:

‘But you will say to me, this people, this republic, this state cannot be supported without Indians. Who is to bring us a pitcher of water or a bundle of wood? Who is to plant our mandioc? Must our wives do it? Must our children do it? In the first place, as you will presently see, these are not the straits in which I would place you: but if necessity and conscience require it, then, I reply, yes! and I repeat yes! You and your wives and your children ought to do it! We ought to support ourselves with our own hands; for better is it to be supported by the sweat of one’s own brow, than by another’s blood.’*

On the other hand, is slavery needful for the slaves? If there were no other way but slavery to elevate them in the scale of beings, then that might be taken. I am not prepared to say that the intelligent should exercise no dominion over the non-intelligent. For the sake of both I contend they should; only it should not be of an extreme kind like slavery, unless there is an absolute necessity. Now whether any such necessity exists or not is a question that may be

* VIEYRA’s first Sermon at St. Luiz, A.D. 1653
SOUTHEY’s *History of Brazil*, vol. ii. p. 479.

settled by historical experience. Doubtless of almost every race in succession, it has been pronounced by their masters, that to get any good out of them, it was necessary to have supreme power over them: and each race has falsified this arrogant assertion. To illustrate this, here is a fragment which I conjecture to have been part of a letter sent by a Roman senator to some young man who had recently come into possession of large property, and was inclined to act with unusual benevolence towards his slaves.—‘It might have been true in former days when all slaves were captives in war from people brave as ourselves, but with this scum of nations, it is absurd. You favour much the British race, and (forgive me) are wont from paradox, to talk of their fidelity and valour. Two of my slaves of that race, no later than the ides of June were detected in a long course of deceit and trickery; not only purloining, but laying the crime on my Thracians, and even on Epænetus, my freedman whom you know. The truthful scourge brought this to light: and for them there is no other reasoning. Can such a rabble of barbarians become a nation? for by nation I do not mean a horde of wandering savages—

‘*Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos—*’

but men formed to carry the ideas of power and justice over the world, fit not only to govern themselves, but to sway others? (a thoroughly Roman theory, by the way, of a nation.) The thing is impossible, and would only delude those delirious persons by whom every new and strange thing is well received. Moreover my physician Festus tells me that these people are by the appointment of the Gods (*divinitus*) an inferior race, proved by their miserably white skin. For, as he says, the lymph in their bodies is altogether of a poor and half-decocted nature which produces these sickly appearances of pink and white. Hence the brain is of a flaccid substance and the whole body is such as cannot be led to good but by stripes, not rarely applied. I do not say these things of myself, and should despise to know them—but they are what the slave (Festus) says. You yourself perceiving the hang-dog look and abject bearing (*gestum demissum perditumque vultum*) of these Britons. And it is with these, and such as these, that we are to eat in company, for so I construe Seneca's fine words* which you read to me the other day.

* Quid ergo? omnes servos admovebo mensæ meæ? non magis quam omnes liberos? Erras, si existimas me

Next, I suppose we are to intermarry with them. But the Gods'—Here the fragment breaks off not inappropriately, as this kind of people are very apt to invoke the Gods in support of their arguments.

But to argue the question on broader grounds. It is not only true that slave-owners have always been apt to fancy that supreme authority and extreme measures were necessary in order to rule their slaves; but all people in authority have erred in the same way. Each year of wise government in a country generally goes to show that men can be governed by less imperious means. That is the meaning and essence of civilization. At first a Turkish bit is needed, or supposed to be; and now, to use the simile of an ingenious satirist,* men are led by invisible threads attached to their heads. Of the millions of actions of all kinds that will be done unwillingly by free men to-day, the greater number of

quosdam quasi sordidioris operæ rejecturum, ut puta illum mulionem, et illum bubulcum: non ministeriis illos æstimabo, sed moribus. Sibi quisque dat mores: ministeria casus assignat. Quidam cœnent tecum, quia digni sunt; quidam, ut sint. Si quid enim in illis ex sordida conversatione servile est, honestiorum convictus excutiet.

—SENECÆ *Epist.* xlvii.

Adventures in the Moon.

them will be done from no physical control or fear, but from motives which cannot be traced back to material influences, depending upon such abstractions as duty, public opinion, and such things; increasing in fineness and not diminishing in strength as we approach the most civilized parts of the earth. I have no doubt that it is not necessary to have supreme power over any reasoning creature to lead it to its own good.

But it may be said, that though this power might not have been necessary originally, yet that it is needed now. The original sheep, for instance, naturalists tell us, was a hardy, boldly hitting, self-sufficient creature. We have brought it now to be timid, dependent, gregarious. Would it be right to dismiss it at once into a free state, where it might perish for want of a master's hand? For the sheep I cannot answer. I suspect that give it room enough, it would do better than we imagine, though deprived of the opportune and gentle coercion of the shepherd's dog; and that in a few generations it might recover some of its original hardihood and daring. But of men I have much less doubt. I cannot but believe that the slaves throughout the world, if set free instantaneously, with no

preparation, would at once lead a happier, a better, a more promising life than they do now. It is true that, like the sheep, they would yield less profit. They would, in fact, live for themselves, and not for their masters. There might be less sugar and coffee in this case, as less wool in the other. I do not underrate the feebleness which comes upon men from being long unaccustomed to exercise a will of their own. Nor do I mean to say that there might not, most wisely, be some preparation for a state of freedom—but simply that absolute and sudden freedom would be better for the slaves than their present state of slavery, in those parts of the world where no preparation whatever is being made for their freedom.

Again, it may be urged that though slavery is needless for individual masters, and needless for individual slaves; yet that a state where slavery exists would be endangered by emancipation of the slaves. If it is meant that the general process of emancipation of slaves in any state might be attended with some danger and difficulty for the masters, that is a question to be met by those who have to consider in detail, how slavery should be done away.

At present we are only seeing whether it is

in itself a needful thing for masters or slaves : and I think it has been shown to be needful for neither.

When we think of the responsibility of having full power over the actions of others (a responsibility which thinking men do not much like to take upon themselves even in the case of animals) we might imagine that individual slave-owners and the governing powers in a slave-state would alike be glad to get rid of slavery. It certainly requires much magnanimity to lay down any portion of power. But this is one fraught with so much apprehension, that, as a matter of comfort, if not of righteousness, we might imagine they would be glad to be quit of it. They cannot flatter themselves with the hope that they are improving the race of their slaves. If you wanted to improve the breed of any race, even of animals, you would not do it by keeping them to their lowest functions, hindering the natural affections, ruling them by fear, and showing them contempt, or contemptuous favour.

But some may think the greatest difficulty is yet to be met. How are the estates to be cultivated, if slavery is not maintained? If this

pecuniary notion is the basis of slavery, the ground is much narrowed, and at any rate we come to this, that any degree of coercion that will meet the particular case will suffice. And at once, on this hypothesis, we might rise from slavery to a feudal system, where certain services admitted by all to be disagreeable and difficult of procurement, are at certain times imperiously required. Even if the diminution of produce in our West-India-Islands could be supposed to be an indication of what would happen under a wiser system of emancipation, and in a different country, (which I totally disbelieve) it is as far as ever from being proved that the present slavery is needful for the slave-owner, the slave, or the slave state.

DUNSFORD. That fragment from the Roman author is very interesting, Milverton.

MILVERTON. Very.

ELLESMERE. My dear Dunsford, what an invaluable creature you are, how charmingly you are imposed upon. That Roman author has just been making a most English dinner at this very 'Lion,' or 'Stag,' or whatever it is called. Ask Milverton to show you the original.

MILVERTON. This is the way in which industrious people who hunt up fragments are treated. But let that pass, as the villain in a tragedy at a fair says, when he has received some deadly insult in the first act, which is to lead to a murder or two in the second. Let that pass. But seriously, Ellesmere, do you agree in the main argument of the essay?

ELLESMERE. Yes, quite. I will tell you a curious thing which came into my mind when you were speaking of the feebleness of people long accustomed to have no will of their own. I hear from a correspondent in Jamaica that fewer children are lost soon after birth, now that the mothers are free, than there were in the times of slavery, though of course great care was taken of both mother and child, if only for the sake of increasing property.

MILVERTON. It is a curious fact, but there are other ways of accounting for it, besides attributing it to the feebleness of the mothers. A mother would not be so anxious to preserve the slave child as the free child.

ELLESMERE. Yes: I only mentioned it as a fact worth your inquiring into. As to the general argument of the essay, against the supposed needfulness of slavery, I think it of the

first importance. I suppose it rarely occurs that an abuse dies quite a natural death—I mean that everybody has found out that it is an abuse—that it drops off the tree without being shaken. It almost always appears needful to some persons.

MILVERTON. To meet this view of this subject, Franklin has an admirable essay, consisting of a speech by an imaginary Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the divan of Algiers, against the petition of the sect called Erika who prayed for the abolition of piracy and slavery. I thought you would like to hear it, so I brought the little volume with me.

ELLESMERE. Let us have it.

MILVERTON. ‘Have these Erika considered the consequences of granting their petition? If we cease our cruises against the Christians, how shall we be furnished with the commodities their countries produce, and which are so necessary for us? If we forbear to make slaves of their people, who, in this hot climate, are to cultivate our lands? Who are to perform the common labour of our city, and of our families? Must we not then be our own slaves? And is there not more compassion and more favour due to us Mussulmen than to those Christian dogs?—We

have now above fifty thousand slaves in and near Algiers. This number, if not kept up by fresh supplies, will soon diminish, and be gradually annihilated; If, then, we cease taking and plundering the infidels' ships, and making slaves of the seamen and passengers, our lands will become of no value for want of cultivation; the rents of houses in the city will sink one half; and the revenues of government arising from the share of prizes, must be totally destroyed.—And for what? To gratify the whim of a whimsical sect, who would have us not only forbear making more slaves, but even manumit those we have. But who is to indemnify their masters for the loss? Will the state do it? Is our treasury sufficient? Will the Erika do it? Can they do it? Or would they, to do what they think justice to the slaves, do a greater injustice to the owners? And if we set our slaves free, what is to be done with them? Few of them will return to their native countries; they know too well the greater hardships they must there be subject to. They will not embrace our holy religion: they will not adopt our manners: our people will not pollute themselves by intermarrying with them. Must we maintain them as beggars in our streets; or suffer

our properties to be the prey of their pillage? for men accustomed to slavery will not work for a livelihood when not compelled.—And what is there so pitiable in their present condition? Were they not slaves in their own countries?’

ELLESMERE. It is so well done, that one can hardly believe that Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim is fabulous, and that ‘The Times’ reporter was not there. Go on.

MILVERTON. ‘I repeat the question, What is to be done with them? I have heard it suggested, that they may be planted in the wilderness, where there is plenty of land for them to subsist on, and where they may flourish as a free state.—But they are, I doubt, too little disposed to labour without compulsion, as well as too ignorant to establish good government; and the wild Arabs would soon molest and destroy, or again enslave them. While serving us, we take care to provide them with everything, and they are treated with humanity. The labourers in their own countries are, as I am informed, worse fed, lodged and clothed. The condition of most of them is therefore already mended, and requires no further improvement. How grossly are they mistaken, in imagining slavery to be disavowed by the Alcoran! Are not the two

precepts, to quote no more, 'Masters, treat your slaves with kindness—Slaves, serve your masters with cheerfulness and fidelity,' clear proofs to the contrary? Let us then hear no more of this detestable proposition, the manumission of Christian slaves.'

ELLESMERE. I had no idea the old republican had so much wit in him.

MILVERTON. It is an admirable piece of irony, certainly. But I will show you that real life can beat it. Here is an extract from Southey's *Brazil*, which I had put up with the Franklin. It is part of a report of the proceedings of a Portuguese Commission appointed to decide about the fate of some Indian captives at Belem.

'But the superiors of the Carmo and of the Merces voted that they should all be slaves, because among savages all wars were lawful. The Franciscan Superior began by saying he wished God would reveal to him by an angel whether those wars had been just or unjust: but he inclined to believe they were just, because the Doctors had laid down that there were twelve just causes of war, and among so many it was impossible that these men should not have fallen upon one. To this it was replied, the Doctors had also laid down that there were twenty-four

unjust causes of war, and therefore upon his own premises, the chances against his conclusion were precisely two to one. He, however, gave his vote that they should be all slaves, but that their children if they had any should be free. The vicar gave no reason for his opinion, but merely pronounced 'Slaves! Slaves!' This was his uniform vote, and his uniform manner of voting; and when he was once pressed to explain the motives for his decision, he answered, that the men who presented these captives were Christians; and therefore it was not to be presumed that they would do anything wrong; that such had always been the custom in that state;—that if the Indians were declared free, the men who had procured them would lose their labour, and there would be a mutiny among the people. One of the Friars helped him in this precious reasoning, by saying, that the Indians lost nothing by becoming slaves, and that slavery was a practice which originated in compassion, as if, says Vieyra, it were the same thing to commute death for servitude, as to deprive a free man of his liberty.'

ELLESMERE. Swift might have written every word of it—no, not every word, for he would not have put in that word 'precious,' but would

have told the story in such a manner, that many a reader would not exactly make out what the narrator himself thought of the transaction. Ah me, it is terrible though, that all this hideous irony should be about real men, and not Brobdingnags and Lilliputians.

DUNSFORD. Well, I am glad to see that there are other things in the passage besides the irony of it, that strike you. It seemed as if we were tending only to criticism, and discussions about irony.

ELLESMERE. We cannot always have our pity on the surface in the right conventional quantity and quality, Dunsford. Night presses down in our minds upon things that we, in pity to ourselves, will not let the daylight in upon. In considering the affairs of life, we might stand pity-struck, if we did not save ourselves sometimes from it. I can understand how a Goethe, anxious to make the most of himself, should avoid horrors.

DUNSFORD. It is easy to see that the most humane man may talk of horrors without taking them up on the pitiable side. But as to what you say of Goethe, I do not altogether approve of such circumspect avoidance of painful subjects.

ELLESMERE. He did the same with certain

great intellectual questions. They might agitate other men;—they would, he saw, to the end of time; but he passed them by, not seeing that anything would come of them in his mind. And time and labour would be lost.

MILVERTON. A prudent wisdom; but there is a higher wisdom which does not remind us of prudence.

ELLESMERE. We want to talk about Goethe. No two people can agree about a great man. He presents so much to them.

But, Milverton, what, may I ask, are the especial delights of this little inn?

MILVERTON. My dear fellow, no human pleasure will bear to be put in the witness-box, as I see you are going to put this.

ELLESMERE. But, really, this is a commonplace sort of affair—a well-proportioned room, with no oddities about it.

MILVERTON. Look out from this window and consider that countenance in brick-work. To the left. There is something unusual for you.

DUNSFORD. Upon my word there is. That is Roman—the face of some emperor, I do believe—perhaps Probus, whose coins we have hereabouts.

MILVERTON. It seems Roman certainly. I

knew there was such a thing here which would at least be something for you to see.

DUNSFORD. We will have a good look at it before we go.

ELLESMERE. And some Edie Ochiltree will come up to us and say he 'minds the bigging of it.'

MILVERTON. No—it came from an old place in the neighbourhood, and was then fixed in that wall. These parts abound in Roman remains. I always fancy that the faces of the peasantry have a great deal of the Roman in them. I care much more about Roman antiquities than any other to be found here. We seem to have so much in common with anything since William the Conqueror's time. But a relic of these old Romans takes one into another world as it were.

DUNSFORD. By a Roman road.

MILVERTON. Yes; and of all that they have left behind them, there is scarcely anything which interests me more than one of these same roads. Look at it in the map, how it stands alone amidst the judicious windings of modern invention. It is like the doings of a stern, fearless, outspoken man, often going over huge hills which, with a little management, he

might have gone round ; but you know where he is going, and what he does mean. He does not pretend to know the easiest way : he can only say that his is the straightest.

ELLESMERE. With my lawyer-like notions, I am not so great an admirer of this brutal directness. What says Wallenstein ?

Straight forward goes

The lightning's path, and straight the fearful path
Of the cannon ball. Direct it flies and rapid
Shattering that it *may* reach, and shattering what it
reaches.

My son ! the road, the human being travels,
That, on which blessing comes and goes, doth follow
The river's course, the valley's playful windings,
Curves round the cornfield and the hill of vines,
Honouring the holy bounds of property !
And thus secure, though late, leads to its end.

What I like the Romans for, is their stoicism. That was a grand theory for them. It is impossible not to have some respect for it—a man thinking that he has no clear cause for hope or comfort, here or hereafter, but resolving that at any rate he will bear what comes—and making out a religion of endurance only. Human nature driven into a corner and standing at bay ! Slight thinkers will tell you that stoicism was but a theory, never translated into life. But none of these great ideas remain

theories only. You do not see them, perhaps, meet any particular case; but they form the mind: they impose limits both upon thought and feeling.

DUNSFORD. If I were not frightened by Ellesmere's 'slight thinkers' I should say something, I think, depreciatory of Stoicism—But let us go and see that Roman Emperor in brick, and then come back and talk over Stoicism. By that time I shall have courage.

ELLESMERE. Don't you think, Milverton, we might have another part of this essay on Slavery in the course of the evening? I asked you to bring a good deal of it. And then, as we ride home, we can talk it over, or wander into other things. Having something to discuss, which one ought to keep to, makes discursiveness more pleasant.

MILVERTON. I suspect, Dunsford, that Ellesmere is very anxious to get through this subject.

ELLESMERE. Indeed I am not. I like these essays which are addressed to some concrete subject, and which at least pretend to go upon facts, and to make for some definite course of action. I don't think them dull at all—at least for an evening at an inn.

MILVERTON. Persuasive and complimentary


man that you are, you shall be indulged with another section: the next thing I want to prove is, that slavery is unauthorized. And, after having completed our antiquarian researches, we will return to that.

We were soon again assembled in the inn parlour, and Milverton proceeded to read the following section.

3. THAT SLAVERY IS UNAUTHORIZED.

There are three main sources of authority other than a man's own conscience. These are the words and deeds of inspired persons, of wise men in former days, of wise men in the present time. The advocates of slavery would probably contend that they had all three in their favour, especially the first. If so, it is a tower of strength to them, which we of the other side cannot leave untaken behind us. In the course of dislodging them from it, we shall find ourselves on the perilous margin of some deep and difficult questions which cannot however be avoided.

The question of verbal inspiration for instance, meets us at the outset. If any sentence taken from the Bible is of that virtue, that, without




being looked at in reference to the context, by the light of history, with the aid of general criticism, or even of particular comparison with other texts, it is conclusive; in short, if each text is to have an infallibility of its own, then possibly some text may be found which might at once give the authority of Scripture to the practice of slave-holding.

But is there to be no such thing as advance beyond any portion of the Bible; May not the highest conception of inspired persons be much below what the inspiration of themselves and others will produce, when it has enlarged and enlightened the minds of successive generations? Were the ideas of inspired persons upon all subjects absolutely right? We cannot say so without, as it seems, a thorough perversion of the plain sense of their words, endeavouring, for instance, to make out that some of the Apostles did not believe that the world was to come to an end in their time; we cannot say so without a complete suppression of science, insisting for instance on the sun's moving round the earth, and the earth standing still the while. 'E pur si muove.' 'It does move though.' So, with slavery. Compel us to bow down to the narrowest interpretation of individual texts, the

heart relying on the spirit of Scripture, still whispers to itself: men should be free.

It may be said that the instances given above relate to physical matters; but that moral laws are enounced clearly, and are not to be amended. Doubtless the highest moral principles are to be found clearly enounced in the Bible, and are such as human nature may in vain attempt to advance beyond. But slavery is not one of these principles. You find regulations respecting it. Do each of these regulations contain high principles exhausting the possibilities of human nature? In other Jewish practices, in the treatment of prisoners for instance, do we recognise an infallible authority for similar conduct on our part? Again, slavery is a thing of mixed nature, varying in every clime, originating in various circumstances, and leading to various results. Regulations about it cannot well be universal. Principles may. The truth is, the gist of our opponents' arguments is, that had slavery been fatally wrong, it would have been forbidden in the Bible. The question is, whether it was fatally wrong for that time: and I do not know that any one asserts that it was. It must be recollected, however, that the institution of slavery commenced in the ransom of captives



who otherwise might have been slain, or in buying the services for life of indigent persons from themselves. The Jewish law was extreme against any other kind of slave-dealing. 'And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, *or if he be found in his hand*, he shall surely be put to death.'*

We are not bound to confine ourselves to the nice and hazardous questions we have just been treating. Say what we may about these questions, there are persons who will look at them from another side, and who may still suppose that the Bible affords a stronghold for the advocates of modern slavery. But we are now coming to closer quarters. Allow that the system of Jewish slavery is a divinely authorized one, and that we have made, and are to make, no advance in humanity since then, still the system of modern slavery is utterly unauthorized,—is utterly condemned. Where is the Jubilee in Carolina or Georgia? Again, Moses says, 'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall

* *Exodus* ch. xxi. v. 16.

choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.* What will the slave states say to that? Moses bids the Israelites 'gather the people together, men and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law.† Is this a law against teaching slaves? Moses ordains, that 'if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.‡ If this were law south of the Potomac, what need would there be for those advertisements describing slaves by the very injuries, which then would be the titles to their freedom? Can modern slave-owners say with Job, 'If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me: what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in

* *Deut.* ch. xxiii. v. 15. † *Deut.* ch. xxxi. v. 12.

‡ *Exodus*, ch. xxi. v. 26.

the womb make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?"*

I subjoin a summary of the state of Jewish slaves, for those who wish to be minutely acquainted with the subject.

‘With the Israelites service was either voluntary, or judicially imposed by the law of God. Strangers only, or the descendants of strangers, became their possession by purchase; but, however acquired, the law gave the Jewish servants many rights and privileges: they were admitted into covenant with God; they were guests at all the national and family festivals; they were statedly instructed in morals and religion; they were released from their regular labour nearly one half of their term of servitude. The servants of the Israelites were protected by the law equally with their masters; and their civil and religious rights were the same. Finally these servants had the power of changing their masters, and of seeking protection where they pleased, and should their masters by any act of violence injure their persons, they were released from their engagements. The term of Hebrew servi-

* *Job* ch. xxxi. v. 13, 14, 15.

tude was six years, beyond which they could not be held unless they entered into new engagements; while that of strangers, over whom the rights of the master were comparatively absolute, terminated in every case on the return of the jubilee, when liberty was proclaimed to all.*

If modern slavery were anything like Jewish slavery, there would have been, comparatively speaking, but little need of abolitionists to moot the subject.

But if Jewish authority avails the defenders of slavery but little, perhaps Christianity may do so more. On the contrary, however, I venture to assert that Christianity never was more wronged than when used to defend a system like modern slavery. Christianity entered into no political system, to confirm it. Systems, constitutions, and the like are perishable things, and if Christianity could be shut up in them, it would be perishable too. The great precepts of Christianity, 'Do as you would be done by,' 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' will hardly be produced to justify the continuance of modern

* *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, vol. ii. p. 775.

slavery. Does any one think, that if a slave-owner were to ask the question 'who is my neighbour,' that his slave would be pointed out as an especial exception? Or does any Christian imagine that the author of his religion would look with satisfaction on slavery now?

But Saint Paul gave directions how masters and slaves should behave to each other—but he sent back Onesimus to his master. These are the arguments in reply. Saint Paul's Master said 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;' does that perpetuate the necessity for imperial dominion, or conclude that such dominion is the best form of government? Men's institutions are, if we may say so, left to themselves; Christianity aims alone at giving the spirit which should form those institutions, and teaching people how to live under them.

But if inspired writers cannot be brought as authorities for modern slavery, there may be adduced a general consent of the eminent men of antiquity. And for what may there not? The habits and prejudices of their own times oppress the greatest intellects, as a slight barrier close to the eyes totally interrupts the keenest vision. Still it must not be allowed to be a general consent to the whole doctrines of modern

slavery. The Greeks certainly looked upon slavery (like some modern slave owners) as a thing desirable with reference to the laws of nature and the permanent diversities in the races of men.* But the Romans viewed slavery as a creature of the law.† Some of their most eminent men endeavoured to ameliorate the condition of slaves; for laws of this kind were passed by Augustus, Claudius, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Septimius Severus, Constantine, Theodosius II., and Justinian.‡ It is pleasant also to observe that there are instances of several of the most eminent men treating their slaves with kindness, or, in their writings, showing some concern for the cruelties practised upon slaves. Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Pliny, Plutarch, Juvenal, Persius and Martial may be quoted to support this.§ And above all, Seneca, whose letter before referred to, is one of the most admirable things that have been written on the subject of slavery.

Again, in estimating the Roman system of slavery, the manumission must be taken into account, a manumission so frequent, that Au-

* Blair, p. 297.

† Ibid. pp. 86, 87.

‡ Ibid.


§ Ibid. p. 125.

gustus thought it right to restrict it within certain limits.

But making the best that can be made of slavery amongst the Greeks or Romans, it is one of the greatest blots upon their social system ; and any one would imagine that a reasonable man of modern times would no more think of looking up to the ancients as authorities for the maintenance of slavery, than he would of defending the exposure of children, or the combats of gladiators, because ancient men of renown perceived no evil in either of these practices. Very wise men in this country once thought torture a judicious mode of discovering truth. We are above that error now ; we have found it out : nothing but a general relapse into barbarism could bring us back to it. Long columns of weighty names would never again reconcile us to burning witches. And, upon similar grounds, the opinions and practice of antiquity as regards slaves, even of the wisest part of it, should not be received as any valid authority whatever in justification of the system of modern slavery.

The third source of authority, as mentioned before, is to be found in the words and conduct of contemporaries. And here slavery finds anything but allies. Among those who are them-

selves interested, at least as they believe, in maintaining the slave system, there will be many honourable men of superior attainments: and others will point to them and say, can it be wrong to think as they think, to do as they do? But as we found, in estimating the weight of ancient authority, so here also, general sagacity and uprightness cannot bear up against the prejudices amongst which a man is born—which are the breath of his nostrils to him. Putting, therefore, the authority of these interested persons at the highest, we cannot consider it as the best which can be given. And when we go from them to impartial judges, even the advocates of slavery themselves, will, I apprehend, allow that the utmost that is generally pronounced for them by the outer world—that is, the free world,—is of a negative character: that slavery is not so bad as it is represented—that it is very well talking about the evils of slavery, but who will find the remedy—that it is doubtful whether the negro race is capable of high development—and other generalities of this kind. But I do not know of any great thinker of modern times whose deliberate and disinterested opinion can be adduced in favour of modern slavery.



Almost immediately after the reading, we commenced our ride homewards, intending to have our conversation on horseback, which thus began, as the horses started off with their wonted eagerness to get to their own stables.

ELLESMERE. Faust and Mephistopheles on wild horses!

MILVERTON. Who is Dunsford then?

ELLESMERE. (Aside, but I heard it) Wagner.

MILVERTON. This is something that steam cannot do for us, is it not?

ELLESMERE. A steam engine would be very well to ride for once. But as it has no memory, no temper, no perversities to deal with, the amusement would soon be over. Now this animal of yours recollects my being cross with her this morning; and is bent upon punishing me for it. And I am obliged to be very civil to the creature, that she may not be more fractious the next time I have to ride her. There is a great deal of diplomacy going on between us.

MILVERTON. Louis the Eleventh managing the Duke of Burgundy. Louis is at Peronne just at present.

ELLESMERE. Well, but about the essay. I had no idea there was such a case to be made against modern slavery from the Jewish treatment of slaves. When we get home, you must let me have the essay. I want to look at the passages you quote and to see the context.

MILVERTON. You shall.

ELLESMERE. Does much wind come up the valley behind your house?

MILVERTON. It is bleak in winter there; but why do you ask?

ELLESMERE. You were talking the other day about opinions being burnt into, or out of, men: and as there is some burning matter in that last section of your essay, I was thinking what were the conveniences. Of course it is desirable that the burning should be near home, to make the example tell better.

MILVERTON. You allude to what I say about inspiration: but I have great names to shelter me. Have you ever read Coleridge's *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*?

ELLESMERE. Yes; and I have long wondered that the subject should have remained, comparatively speaking, dormant.

MILVERTON. It is strange to think what awful questions there are behind this rubbish about white or black gowns, and the like.



DUNSFORD. Not rubbish by any means—often at the least the counters with which the great game is played.

MILVERTON. But do not great questions thus get pared down, or partially considered, or entirely avoided?

ELLESMERE. The last may be a gain.

MILVERTON. Should the greatest questions however arise in religion and be most fiercely debated, I hardly think people will be able to illustrate their arguments by such doings as they were wont. The wind in that valley will not, I think, in a hurry be put to the use you were so kindly imagining, Ellesmere.

ELLESMERE. I should be sorry, myself, to make any distinct prophecy about the limits of human intolerance.

MILVERTON. I think there are limits now. But what things have been done! I don't know how it is with you, but religious intolerance and its fruits form an abyss of a subject for contemplation which I cannot get away from, sometimes. Now, last night, I was reading of the thirty years' war, just at the destruction of Magdeburg—the town fired and thirty thousand people destroyed in a day.

DUNSFORD. Protestants, were they not?

MILVERTON. Yes—but Protestants were just as bad in their way. In fact both names, Protestant and Catholic, are so steeped in blood, that one hardly likes, I think, to lay any claim to either. Then, when you come to think what the subjects of this religious discord were and are—refinements and abstractions about which no man scarcely can have what may be called an opinion. Then, again, if you consider what a fallacious thing agreement of opinion is—how uncertain. Let a man only observe the changes he goes through in a day. A candid man who really looked into what was passing in his mind would often acknowledge that he had been on all sides of a question in the course of a day. Macbeth asks:

‘Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment?’

He answers: ‘no man.’ I should venture to say: ‘all men.’

DUNSFORD. Push this to an extreme, and you get rid of all character.

MILVERTON. No—there is a course pursued both in feeling and opinion, which coincides with, and results from, character; but the oscillations, at least in minds of any self-reliance, are often unceasing.

But to show what agreement in opinion may be; take such a case as the following. Let two men have strong and deliberate opinions which agree. Still their present agreement may indicate an intense disagreement at a future time, and may show at present extreme diversity of nature. So that it may only come to this, that at a particular point of their several paths there is intersection. After and before they may diverge indefinitely.

DUNSFORD. This is very subtle.

MILVERTON. Indeed it is much more commonplace than you at first imagine. Now, Ellesmere, if you (oh he is half a mile off) but, Dunsford, if Ellesmere who is a man that has seen much of the world, has been in many transactions, and gone through many stages of opinion, if he were to find a young man from college exactly agreeing with him on some difficult political question—the youth not talking after anybody else, but having worked out principles for himself which settle this question for him in the way that Ellesmere has been worn down to. Would you class those two men as really alike? They agree now: in the rotation of crops both lands happen for a season to bear the same grain; but the soils are essentially different.


DUNSFORD. I must own that your theory works out better than I had thought. But apply it largely, and what becomes of churches and parties and all bodies of men.

MILVERTON. Such considerations as I have mentioned need not break up what is really useful and harmonious in bodies of men. But these said considerations would often take the sting out of intolerance. Advantages of many kinds are to be obtained by men agreeing with each other in opinion on different subjects: and men will be contented—must be contented, with the best agreement amongst them they can get. But had many a bigot seriously thought what the minds of men are like, and what agreement amongst them is, it might have tamed him wonderfully. Similar considerations apply to our judgment of the moral character also.

DUNSFORD. How? I do not see what you mean.

MILVERTON. Why that in the one case you will often have to go deeper than the action, to look for the moral character; as in the other, deeper than the opinion, to look for the mental character.

ELLESMERE. Well, at last I have got back to you. Whether this detestable mare has had



enough of philosophy in her time, or that she has determined to pay me off for this morning's work, I have only been able to catch faint buzzings of talk till we came in sight of your red chimneys. I have no doubt I should have disagreed with what you were saying—so you may enter a protest for me. Thank goodness we are at home again. Philosophers should have nothing but cobs for themselves and their friends.

MILVERTON. Louis has got back to Plessis les Tours, and ought only to be too glad to be there with unbroken bones.





CHAPTER III.

A LONG interval has elapsed between the time of our last reading in the little inn at ——— and the reading which will be given in this chapter. It almost seemed as if our conversation about travel had something prophetic in it. When we last parted, we were all looking forward to many a summer's day spent together amidst this simple English scenery; and never dreamt that the next time we should meet would be in the city of many churches, Cologne. But shortly after the reading recorded in the last chapter, Milverton's health suddenly broke down. His illness was long and tedious; and a change of climate was recommended for him. The remedy was in great measure successful; and early in the ensuing spring when our friend still lingered in his way homewards, Ellesmere proposed to me to go and meet him on the Rhine. Lucy, at Ellesmere's request, accompanied me; and we had the plea-



sure of finding Milverton in comparatively renovated health at Cologne. It was one day while we were looking idly from the bridge of boats, that Ellesmere expressed a wish that we had one of 'our essays,' for so he called them, to read. Milverton told him that he could soon gratify him in that respect; for, very foolishly as I think, he had sent for his books and papers. He also said he would show us a place—not exactly like our lawn—but still very fit for a quiet reading; and accordingly the next day he carried us to the yard close to the cathedral, near the sheds where the masons are working, and said we might seat ourselves on the great stones which lay scattered about, and have our reading there.


After going over the cathedral which, however often we may have seen it, it is almost impossible to be near without entering, and difficult to enter without staying longer than was intended, we returned to the group of stones we had fixed on for our seats; and, interrupted only by the repeated click of the workmen's tools, Milverton read the following section of his essay on slavery.

4. THAT SLAVERY IS MISCHIEVOUS TO THE
MASTER AS WELL AS TO THE SLAVE.

What is the wealth of a state, in the large sense of the word? not gold certainly—nor iron—nor large population—nor fertile vegetation—nor extensive territory—nor even wise laws. Adam Smith says:

‘It deserves to be remarked, perhaps, that it is in the progressive state, while the society is advancing to the further acquisition, rather than when it has acquired its full complement of riches, that the condition of the labouring poor, of the great body of the people, seems to be the happiest and the most comfortable. It is hard in the stationary, and miserable in the declining state; the progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of the society. The stationary is dull; the declining melancholy.’

This may afford a clue to what the wealth that we are seeking to understand, consists in. It is a power of action, rather than a thing possessed. It cannot be realized, except partially, being inexhaustible. If we must give any one




word for it, that word is vitality. That vitality, however, is the sum of many things, and depends upon many things having just relations to each other. It is the focus, as it were, where many rays of light converge. If there is heat there, there is warmth throughout the body politic. This vitality is nowhere more seen, perhaps, than in the power of progress in a nation: and at first thinking on this subject, we may imagine that we have come to the root of the matter, in concluding that the power of progress is the wealth of a nation. But this will not always be a just test; for physical circumstances such as a vast unoccupied territory, may give great power of progress, even too great for a time. The vitality that I mean consists of a certain elasticity and durability also. We should be able to say of a great nation, as of a great man,

'Omnis Aristippum decuit color et status et res.'

Part of this vitality consists in national character; but the highest national character in some portion only of the nation will not do. The Spartans would never have grown into a great people. As you require a certain extent of territory for a considerable nation, so you do a certain extent of mind—of self-

governing mind. Imagine England, for instance, to have consisted only of feudal lords and their retainers. Let these feudal lords have been great people, and worthy to lead. Still there would not have been substance enough, or variety of position enough, to bear up against reverses, or minds enough for national resources to have grown out of. Deduct all that men of the humbler classes have done for England in the way of inventions only; and see where she would have been but for them.

Now turn to a slave state. What have we there? A solid dead weight—a constant quantity, as the mathematicians would say, in regard of mental power—of which the most that can be hoped, in adverse circumstances, is that it should be only dead weight. A slave state is at best like a nation consisting of a few men and a great many beasts of burden—very tractable creatures perhaps, but no comfort in adversity, and chiefly useful for flight. Whereas in a great, free, many-minded state, the current never sets all one way. Diverse interests, diverse opinions, diverse temperaments, produce a wholesome agitation and support the vitality. Then, again, in times of peace a large mass of slave population has from year to year the same necessities pro-



vided for it; gives little encouragement therefore either to arts or sciences; and adds nothing by invention to national pleasure and national wealth.

The advantages to individual slave-owners must be great indeed if they can balance the national evils arising from slavery. The good effect produced upon their characters by slave-owning must be very considerable, if it can compensate for the evils they have to endure as citizens of a slave state—namely, the weakness moral, intellectual, and physical, of the state, and the chronic fear of insurrection. Now, *à priori*, the owning of slaves would not occur to one as a ready method of forming greatness of character. We do not find on this side of the Atlantic that those classes who are least contradicted are the wisest people amongst us. We should think, too, that if there is one evil greater than almost any other for a child, it would be, to be brought up, as must often happen, amongst those over whom it is taught to exercise supreme authority, and with whom it is not encouraged to sympathize. Human nature differs in planter latitudes from human nature here, if the child accustomed to despotic sway from infancy does not grow up despotic, headstrong and capricious.

And, as the most delicate plants suffer most from any blighting influence, we should expect that women would be even more injured than men by possessing arbitrary power over slaves. It is possible that the character of the planter may contrast favourably with the over-reaching, clever, higgling character which he may sometimes be brought in contact with. There is some compensation for almost every evil. The man who is accustomed to live with utter dependents, will not have any of the habits of over-reaching craft. I do not say that there may not be admirable qualities in the character of a slave-owner, some of them even fostered by his peculiar circumstances; but I suspect it will generally be found to be deficient in tolerance, helpfulness and patient endurance. If not, despotism will in this instance have failed to be the two-edged weapon that it mostly has been—injurious alike to those who wield it, and to those who suffer from it.

MILVERTON. Well, critic, what do you think?

ELLESMERE. I like that part where you say that the sameness of the wants of slaves, or rather of all that is provided for slaves, proves a great dis-

couragement to arts and sciences and ingenuity of all kinds, in slave countries.

MILVERTON. But have you nothing to find fault with?

ELLESMERE. Shortness disarms criticism. When I think, too, how you might have afflicted us with a long dissertation about slavery being the cause of the fall of nations, with quotations from Montesquieu and other authorities, I feel quite benignantly disposed.

MILVERTON. If I had had more to say I should have said it. I should like to have laboured more at this part of the subject, and could find plenty to do in it, but, as Paracelsus says,

'Tis clear if we refuse
The means so limited, the tools so rude
To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
And we shall fade, and nothing will be done.

I feel the full force of these words now. Since I have been ill, I have so often feared that I might not be able to put into shape the unfinished work that I have by me, especially upon this subject, that I am content to say at once what I have to say without much more waiting.

ELLESMERE. I will not gainsay you in that.

LUCY. Don't you think, Mr. Milverton, that

a mother, or an elder sister, in a slave state, being aware of the moral dangers to a child which you point out from its being educated amongst slaves, might counteract the evil?

MILVERTON. Possibly; in some cases.

ELLESMERE. How beautiful the shadows are of those flying buttresses!

There is nothing more that I see to be said about your last section. Let us go into the Cathedral again.

MILVERTON. I am content. The next reading will be a very long one, and may tax your powers of criticism considerably; so we had better make this sitting a short one.





CHAPTER IV.

FROM Cologne we went to Coblenz, Milverton readily agreeing to turn back with us, as we had come so far to meet him. There is, or rather was, (for when once a country has commenced making revolution, it is hazardous to say that anything, especially anything beautiful, still exists) a beautiful little terrace garden close to the Weissen Ross (the White Horse) which overlooked the river. From thence, looking across the river, you see the whole length of the town—the handsome façade of the Palace of Justice, the grave, romanesque and ancient St. Castor, and further inwards, the towers of the other churches. Looking up the Rhine, you seem to see a lake; and the spire of Pfaffendorf rises up on the borders of the lake, reminding you of an English village church.

Coming to this garden, after an early German dinner, we took our station in a corner summer-house, and fanned by the lazy and occasional

flappings to and fro of the awning in front of us, were in a mood to enjoy fully the loveliness of the scene around us. At last Ellesmere, who, I observe, soon gets tired of the contemplation of natural objects, asked for another reading.

MILVERTON. We must begin at once then, as the next section is a very long one.

ELLESMERE. Well, we have all the afternoon before us; and nobody can come and call upon us, or send letters to us, or molest us in any way. We have a little peace here.


LUCY. Oh, Mr. Milverton, do look. A regiment of soldiers is crossing the bridge of boats.

MILVERTON. How the light glancing from their bayonets, and varying with each movement, seems to be marching too. They are sturdy fellows: hark, they are singing 'God save the Queen.'

DUNSFORD. I suppose they come from Schleswig Holstein.

ELLESMERE. Yes: that war is another of the precious follies of these frantic times.

DUNSFORD. No; I think they are going to put down some disturbance at —; I heard that some soldiers were to be sent there.



MILVERTON. Well, there are very few things I have made up my mind upon, as I think I told you last year; but one of the few is, that if I were in authority, I would put down in the most swift and resolute manner anything like mob domination.

ELLESMERE. Did you ever hear my definition of a mob?

LUCY. I certainly have not, Mr. Ellesmere, so pray let me have it. There are such things as female mobs, you know.

ELLESMERE. Yes—and not the easiest to deal with. Now for my definition: a mob is a compound mass of human beings in which each one has for the moment all the follies and evil passions of the rest, in addition to his own, and his usual common sense and good feeling divided by the total number of persons collected together.

DUNSFORD. I do not know how you arrived at these precise quantities; but I dare say you have your own way now, as you used to have at college, of making out difficult problems. But we must not talk any more until after the reading.

Milverton then went for his papers and soon returning read the following section of his essay.

5. THAT THERE ARE NO RACES IN RESPECT TO WHICH THE PRECEDING PROPOSITION AGAINST SLAVERY DO NOT APPLY.

There are many races who have been tried both as masters and slaves, and been found wanting in both capacities. The Romans had slaves from most nations, and I do not know that they spoke favourably of any. Amongst the present masters there is a large proportion of the Anglo-Saxon race, (to say the least of it, an active, independent, thoughtful, humane race) yet they cannot be said to shine as slave-owners. And on the other hand the European slaves in Moorish countries bear the worst of characters.*

The negro race, however, is thought by many persons to be essentially different from all others, and to be peculiarly fitted for slavery. If this be true, it is one of the most important facts in human nature; if false, it is likely to be a sleepless prejudice of the most pernicious kind. Either way it demands rigid inquiry.

* If we look among the North African Moors, what is the state of the European slaves? They bear a worse character, and are inferior in value to the negroes themselves, on account of their untrustiness and treachery!—*Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. ii. p. 132.

Unhappily, the question of negro fitness for slavery is not a question lately mooted, but one which has been settled for a long time by many of those who have to deal most with it. The opinions upon which they proceed vary much in intensity, from the unsparing assertion that 'the negro is a species of orang-outang,'* down to the quiet assumption that the negroes are of such an inferior capacity, that it is difficult to imagine their being able to exist in self-governing communities. The want of sympathy, or to speak plainly, the disgust, arising from these opinions also varies much. In America it is scarcely too much to say that it has been carried to the utmost extravagance. There are many people, excellent, I dare say, in other respects, whose prejudice against the dark race is such, that they do not like to eat with them, journey with them, have their children educated with them, sit at

* I was at a dinner party, where I met a planter from the South, who maintained, or rather asserted, that the negro was a species of orang-outang, and ought not to be considered, and, consequently, not to be treated, as belonging to the human race. His slaves, he added, were his property—his cattle; and he spoke the sentiments of all in the South, when he declared he would draw his sword against any one who should dare to interfere with his rights.—ABDY, vol. i. p. 377.

any public place with them, worship near them, or approach the communion table in their company. Such are the social disabilities attendant upon a dark skin, or upon any shade of dark, visible or possible. It need scarcely be added that civil disabilities less hard to bear, perhaps than social ones, are found, as usual, to accompany them.

Now is there any ground for all this exclusion and disgust? What is the capacity of the negro, and to whom is he related? First, as to his capacity.

In estimating the capacity of any race of men, the circumstances in which they have been placed must be carefully weighed. It is the opinion of some of the learned, that no instance has been found of a savage people becoming civilized without extraneous help. Yet we cannot doubt that amongst savage races there have been, and are, many capable of high civilization. Without subscribing to the opinion of these learned men, I give it as an instance to show how slow must have been the observed progress amongst savages for such an opinion to be tenable at all. On the other hand, see what a rapid change in the nature of a race, a change of circumstances will produce. Nobody can deny

that a considerable alteration has taken place in the nature of the white Americans (whether of English, Gallic, or Germanic origin) since they first settled in that country. Indeed, according to the account of a most intelligent traveller,* this change takes place in one or two generations. Now, many persons would think it at least as great a change as that from a white skin to a black one. If we did not know the origin of these relations of ours, the white men in America, we should be ingenious to a degree in pointing out the wonderful difference which race makes; and we should probably account in this way for most of the political and civil contrasts which the two hemispheres present.

Passing now to the circumstances of the race

* An opinion, which travelling in this country has caused me to modify, is that which respects the permanence of national hereditary character, as transmitted independently of local and political circumstances. Almost everybody here tells me that even in the second generation (that is in the children of emigrants) it is nearly impossible to recognise a distinction in habits or character between those of English, Scotch and Irish blood. They are all American, wherever there is constant intercourse with the mass of the population, though, of course, not so where they live in districts or towns, exclusively together. My own experience stands strongly to confirm this remark.—*GODLEY'S Letters from America*, vol. ii. p. 166.

we are considering,—let any men of the most favoured European extraction imagine what they themselves would have become, if, from an early age, they had been treated as field negroes—driven to work in gangs, worked all day long under the fear of the lash, driven back again and penned up at night. Amongst men so treated how is the feeling of duty to arise; or where is the room for intellectual development? Again, take a more favourable case, suppose that any one of the best European blood had been born to domestic slavery—liable to the caprices of infant cruelty, cared for as a piece of furniture—the temperometer of his master and mistress—if they are unkind, having scarcely any protection from their unkindness but their self-interest (an undefined and mist-like barrier, which passion breaks through without even seeing it)—the mark of scorn to the passer-by—and finding every law and custom coloured differently for his race and that of his masters—would you expect him to retain the greatness of his race? I do not mean to say that all slaves feel these things exactly as I have put them, but they are brought forward to show what a man of any origin would have to contend against, if subjected to treatment similar to that of the African race.

And even if we take the case of the free blacks in America, though it may surprise some persons that they have not done more, yet we have to make immense allowance for the depressing influences to which they are subject. When it is asserted that they have done nothing in literature, science, or art, we must recollect how little the Anglo-Americans themselves have done in this way.* A young people have other things to do. But as regards the blacks, it is almost impossible to estimate the effect of continuous contempt upon a sensitive and impressible people. Sir Charles Lyell kindly and wisely remarks: 'If any individual be gifted with finer genius than the rest, his mind will be the more sensitive to discouragement, especially when it proceeds from a race whose real superiority over his coloured fellow-citizens, in their present condition, he of all others would be the first to appreciate. It is after many trials attended with success, and followed by willing praise and applause, that self-confidence and intellectual power are slowly acquired; and no well-educated black has ever yet had an opportunity of ripening or displaying superior talents in this or any

* Much of what they have done, however, is of high promise.

other civilized country. * * * * * To expect, under such a combination of depressing circumstances, that, in half a century, and in a country where more than six sevenths of the race are still held in bondage, the newly emancipated citizens should under any form of government attain at once a position of real equality is a dream of the visionary philanthropist.*

Lastly, even if it be found in America, or elsewhere, that the white population are very efficient in many ways in which the blacks are not; it still remains to be seen, whether that deficiency is one which forbids self-government and national existence. For these are the questions. Granted for the sake of argument that the blacks are but an imitative race, still if they can imitate civilization, what claim have any of us inventive white men to prevent this beneficial imitation being carried to its utmost development? If there be this alleged deficiency of one kind of mental power in the African race, it is, perhaps, compensated for; and they may possess a superiority in faculties of another description which might greatly ennoble and christianize even the pure Caucasian race.

* LYELL'S *Travels in North America*, vol. i. p. 208.

We have hitherto been treating the matter in the abstract. If we come to consider the instances of proficiency which the negro race have already afforded, we have the amplest grounds for hopefulness about them. It is quite surprising that this part of their case should have been so little worked out. The wittiest of French writers says: 'L'homme, en général, a toujours été ce qu'il est: cela ne veut pas dire qu'il ait toujours eu de belles villes, du canon de vingt-quatre livres de balle, des opéras comiques et des couvents de religieuses. Mais il a toujours eu le même instinct, que le porte à s'aimer dans soi-même, dans la compagnie de son plaisir, dans ses enfants, dans ses petits-fils, dans les œuvres de ses mains.' So, if we had but few facts to give in favour of the probability of a civilization of the negro race similar to our own, we might still contend for it on the general grounds of their resemblance to other branches of the human family in the main elements of civilization. But particular facts abound. It would be difficult to say in what branch of human affairs negroes have not shown some power of excelling. At school we find them, at any rate up to a certain age, equal to the white

children. Their musical powers are undoubted, they have invented musical instruments,* their facility in acquiring languages is, in some instances, remarkable,† they preach, they act, they edit newspapers, they make money sometimes, (surely this will tell in their favour with civilized people) they make poetry, (a folly, perhaps, but a white one) and there are instances of negroes excelling in abstract science.‡ Nay there is

* *Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. ii. pp. 7, 8.

† 'The negroes on the coast of Angola have a remarkable talent for acquiring languages, although their own idiom differs so essentially from any with which we are acquainted, that an European can but seldom overcome the difficulties which it presents, and in some degree master it. I very frequently met with negroes who had been only four weeks on the coast, and who within that incredibly short time could not only understand Portuguese, but could make themselves perfectly intelligible in it. One of the most extensive slave-dealers in Loanda was formerly a slave, and after she had obtained her freedom she studied the Portuguese language by herself, with such diligence that she not only speaks it very fluently, but even carries on her mercantile correspondence, with her own hand, in that language. In the kingdom of Ambriz all the negroes who have intercourse with Europeans speak English, to which many add Portuguese, and some even a tolerable knowledge of French.'—*Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. ii. p. 140.

‡ LAWRENCE'S *Lectures*, pp. 430, 431. Ed. 1822.

even such a phenomenon as a black saint in the Calendar.*

But to form a just estimate of their powers, we must see them in their own country. To do so, let us see what is to be found in an African market, which I think my readers will agree with me in saying, is always one of the first things to be noticed in a strange country. The people of the Niger expedition found 'in the market-place of Gori bags of salt, tobies of various colours, country cloths, camwood in balls, iron-works, as hoes and shovels, Indian corn, dried buffalo's flesh, and dried fish, ground nuts, twine, silk, seeds of various kinds, shea butter, straw hats with enormous brims, platters of woods, and calabashes beautifully carved.† This is not so uncivilized: we find too from another authority,‡ that the power of working

* Benoît de Palermo 'nigro quidem corpore sed candore animi præclarissimus quem et miraculis Deus contestatum esse voluit.'—GRÉGOIRE, *De la Littérature des Nègres*. Paris, 1808, p. 80.

† *Medical History of the Niger Expedition*, by Dr. M'WILLIAM, p. 87.

‡ 'European sabres are occasionally met with, but I am free to confess, that those of African manufacture can compete with them. Some of the tribes who inhabit the rich mining districts towards the South-East, are renowned for their weapons and hardware. The workmanship of the


iron possessed by some of the African tribes, is such as will bear comparison with our own.

But the extracts I am now going to give from the work of an American officer, will much more astonish those who are wont to take for granted the great inferiority of the negro race.

‘The native houses here (Dixcove) are quite large; three or four being two stories high, with balconies, built of stone, in the Spanish style. They are furnished with sofas, bedsteads, and pictures. * * * * It is interesting to meet the natives of Africa at so advanced a stage of refinement, yet retaining somewhat of their original habits and character, which is of course entirely lost in the Liberian colonists.

‘When the white man sets his foot on the shores of Africa, he finds it necessary to throw off his former prejudices. For my own part, I have dined at the tables of many coloured men in Liberia, have entertained them on shipboard, worshipped with them at church; walked, rode,

javelins is of a very superior kind; they are, on an average, five feet in length, and are made entirely of iron, covered from the middle to the butt-end with long-haired goats’ skin.’—*Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. i. p. 139.



and associated with them, as equal with equal, if not as friend with friend. Were I to meet those men in my own town, and among my own relatives, I would treat them kindly and hospitably, as they have treated me. My position would give me confidence to do so. But in another city, where I might be known to few, should I follow the dictates of my head and heart, and there treat these coloured men as brethren and equals, it would imply the exercise of greater moral courage than I have ever been conscious of possessing.*

* *Journal of an African Cruiser*, p. 134, Wiley and Putnam, 1845.

Another European who is conversant with the negroes in Africa, amply confirms the views of the American officer.

‘The innumerable stories which are current, both among partial observers, and in books of travel, had excited in me an unfavourable prejudice against the negroes, and the few skulls of the genuine negro race (of North Guinea) which had come under my own observation, had tended to confirm it; yet a short residence among them, and a careful, impartial observation of these people, sufficed to convince me, that the supposed imperfect human being was a complete man, whose melancholy situation and oppressed condition alone have so sadly degraded him.’ * * * ‘We can only form a correct judgment of the negro, when we see him under his own native skies, living in peace and freedom in his little hut, and surrounded by his wife and children, and domestic enjoyments, where all his interests centre, where

If taking a deeper view of the subject, we consider the moral character of the negro race generally, there is great ground to be sanguine about them. Their cheerfulness is admitted: they have not been found to show a want of tenderness in any social relation: they are not an irreligious race: and, as regards their veracity, I observe that one of these travellers mentions, that though he found the negroes would use falsehood and artifice for their own ends, yet in general narratives they were cautious and scrupulous, often using the expression 'I think he be true.' Now, it is not an inconsiderable progress in truth-telling, when people are careful to speak the truth about matters which do not concern themselves.

If our instances of intellectual and moral development in the negro were all taken from some country where slavery does not exist, it might be augured that, perhaps, there was some capability in the negro before he was enslaved; but that the race could never emerge out of slavery. Facts however contradict any theory

he reaps the fruits of his labour, and where he must contend for all that is dear to him.'—*Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. ii. pp. 130, 134.

of this kind; for it is found in America that the free people of colour are greatly superior to the slaves 'in appearance, dress, manners, and intelligence.'*

Again, it may be contended that all the facts adduced above are instances of individual merit, and that they merely show excellence in what may be called domestic matters; that there is no proof of there being substance in the negro character to form a nation; and that we cannot imagine a negro government otherwise than as a most barbarous thing. To be sure Toussaint has afforded an instance of a great leader; and Liberia an example of an able governor, of whom we read that, 'his deportment is dignified, quiet and sensible, that he has been tried in war as well as in peace, and has invariably been brave, cool, and successful.'

It goes some way to make us credit the possibility of national existence in a race, when we find amongst them men who can govern. But a far more remarkable indication of this possibility is to be seen in the history of the negroes of the Palmares, or Palm Forests, in the Captaincy of Pernambuco. Mr. Southey gives an


* BUCKINGHAM'S *America*, vol. i. p. 454.

account of this interesting Republic in his history of Brazil. It existed for sixty years; and was formed of the negroes who, escaping from slavery, acted upon the offensive and attacked the Portuguese; gaining their wives as the first Romans theirs. They were governed by a chief elected for life, called the Zombi; and it is said by their enemies that the laws and government of this negro people were very good; and that during the whole time the state was in existence, there was no instance of political trouble of any kind.

The Pernambucans found it worth while to trade with the black republic; and, notwithstanding it was forbidden, supplied them with arms, ammunition and European commodities, in exchange for their produce and booty.

At last the Portuguese state was obliged to bestir itself against this black community. Caetano de Mello, the governor, resolved to extirpate the negroes, and ordered one of his officers, Domingos Jorge, to attack the Palmares, who marched against their chief settlement with a thousand men. Mr. Southey's description of the place cannot well be abridged.

‘A double palisade of the hardest wood which




the forests of Brazil produce, enclosed within a circuit of four or five miles a population of more than 20,000 persons. The fortification was strengthened by many bulwarks: there were only three gates, which were placed at equal distances; each had its platform of defence, and was at all times under the charge of one of their best officers. The palace of the Zombi was spacious, and not without a kind of rude magnificence; and the houses of individuals were, after their fashion, commodious and splendid. There was a lake within the circuit, abounding with fish, and there were also running streams, * * * * but the water seems to have been brackish or salt, for the inhabitants sunk wells, or rather those shallow pits that are called *cacimbas*, which implies that it was only rendered potable by filtration. There was also a high rock within the enclosure, which served them for a watchpost, and from whence some of the Pernambucan towns and settlements were visible in the distance. Besides this, their chief city, they had many smaller settlements, or garrisons, called *Mocambos*, in which chosen men were stationed for the defence of the plantations.'

Domingos Jorge pitched his camp before the

town. The negroes unexpectedly made a sally, and 'eight hundred persons on both sides were killed and wounded.' The Portuguese commander then thought it best to go back again to Porto Calvo and make a junction with a large body of troops which was waiting for him there. The siege was renewed by an army of six thousand Portuguese under another commander, Bernardo Vieira de Mello. An escalade was attempted, which was repelled by the negroes with arrows, boiling water, fire-arms, and fire-brands. The powder of the negroes was at last exhausted. The Portuguese, however, were still successfully resisted: and they were obliged to send for reinforcements and cannon. Both sides were now in want of provisions: the negroes in want of missiles also. At last from the watch-tower they beheld large convoys of cattle, laden horses and carts, coming to the besiegers' camp. Upon this, the enfamished men lost their spirit, the gates were forced, and the Zombi with the most resolute of his followers threw themselves headlong from the precipice. The survivors were enslaved.

These men wanted but a poet. Their fate would make an epic, showing anything but negro incapacity.



There is one aspect of the Negro faculties and character, which, for want of materials, has seldom been presented to us; and that is, the aspect which they presented to the first discoverers of their land. In another work I have given some account of these discoveries: and the circumstance which struck me most in considering the narrative was the respect with which the new race of men was regarded by the old, on their first great meeting since the introduction of Christianity. I do not recollect one instance of abusive or depreciatory language in the contemporary accounts or in those of the earliest historians. The only distinction which the foremost man in modern geographical discovery, Prince Henry of Portugal, seems to have made between the negroes and any other race was a religious one. In sending out one of his captains, he tells him, that 'if he should not be able to obtain so many negroes (as had been mentioned) in exchange for the three Moors, yet that he should take them; for whatever number he should get, he would gain souls, because they (the negroes) might be converted to the faith, which could not be managed with the Moors.'*

* *The Conquerors of the New World*, vol. i. p. 28. BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 1, cap. 7.

Instances of negro bravery, of negro sagacity, and of some considerable knowledge of the arts of life occur in this narrative; and if we take the very first account we have of the religious ceremonies and opinions at a negro court, we shall not find it such as to give us a mean idea of the development of the negro mind in that respect, and it may contrast favourably with the religious rites of many savage nations.

It is to be found in the travels of Ca da Mosto, a young Venetian who visited Africa, under Prince Henry's orders, about the middle of the fifteenth century. 'Budomel'* (the king of a territory in or near the present Foulah) 'behaved with great complaisance to Ca da Mosto, and carried him into the Mosque; for, towards evening, he ordered the Azanaghi or Arabs, whom he always has about him, to say prayers. His manner was thus:—Being entered into the Mosque (which was in one of the courts) with some of the principal negroes, he first stood with his eyes lifted up, then he advanced two steps, and spoke a few words softly; after which, he stretched himself on the ground and kissed it.

* *The Conquerors of the New World*, vol. i. p. 52.
ASTLEY'S *Voyages*, vol. i. p. 584.

The Azanaghi, and all the rest, did the same. Then rising, he repeated the same acts over again ten or twelve times, which took up half an hour. When he had done, he asked the author's opinion of their manner of worship; and to give him some account of his own religion. Hereupon Ca da Mosto told him, in presence of his doctors, that the religion of Mohammed was false; and the Romish, the true one. This made the Arabs mad, and Budomel laugh; who, on this occasion, said that he looked upon the religion of the Europeans to be good: for that none but God could have given them so much riches and understanding. He added, however, that the Mohammedan law must be also good; and that he believed the negroes were more sure of salvation than the Christians, because God was a just Lord; and therefore, as he had given the latter Paradise in this world, it ought to be possessed in the world to come by the negroes, who had scarce anything here, in comparison of the others. In all his discourse he showed a good understanding, and took great pleasure in hearing the customs of the Christians. Ca da Mosto believed he might easily have been converted, were it not for fear of losing his estate; for his nephew, in whose

house he lodged, often told him so; and took great delight himself in hearing the author talk of his religion.'

A striking indication of the favourable aspect which the negroes presented to their first conquerors and masters is to be found in the account
1487. of Bemoin, one of the princes of the blood royal of Jalof, who came to Lisbon to seek succour from the King of Portugal in consequence of some intestine divisions in the country of Jalof. I take the very words of the historian. 'Bemoin, because he was a man of large size and fine presence, about forty years old, with a long and well-arranged beard, appeared indeed not like a barbarous pagan, but as one of our own princes, to whom all honour and reverence were due: with like majesty and gravity of demeanour he commenced and finished his oration, with such inducements to make men bewail his sad fortune in exile, that only seeing these natural signs of sorrow, people comprehended what the interpreter afterwards said. And having finished the statement of his case as a good orator would, in declaring that his only remedy and only hope was in the greatness and generosity of the king, with whom he spoke aside for a short time, he was answered by the king in few words, so

much to his satisfaction that immediately it made a change in his whole look, spirits, and bearing, rendering him most joyous. And taking leave of the king, he went to kiss the queen's hand, and then that of the prince to whom he said a few words, at the end of which he prayed the prince that he would intercede in his favour with the king. And thence he was conducted to his lodgings by all the nobility that accompanied him.*

Portugal was at that time one of the most important countries in Europe, and the Portuguese amongst the most accomplished people. From many other facts and considerations which have reference to the Spanish as well as the Portuguese, I have no doubt that the first impression produced by the negroes on the Europeans of the 15th century, was very dissimilar to that which has since grown up in the minds of their descendants.

We need not proceed further with instances of negroes excelling in matters bearing an affinity to European civilization. My object is not to

* BARROS, dec. 1, lib. 3, cap. 6. *The Conquerors of the New World*, vol. i. p. 70.

prove that the Negro may become equal and alike to the Caucasian. On the contrary I am inclined to think that there are considerable differences in kind, pointing to different developments: nor, for my own part, should I particularly desire that the faculties of any race, even our own Anglo-Saxon one, should absorb the work of the world. The scheme of the world is very large: and, as it has been quaintly said, 'it takes a many to make a world.' The Caucasian may be a nobly-developed creature; but there may be work to be done by another variety of the human species. The advocates of slavery may think that this is an admission tending to their views. It may be allowed that there is a peculiar physical work to be done by the negro race; certain parts of the earth, therefore, particularly adapted for their residence; which, indeed, may be so constituted as perpetually to remind other races that they are intruders in those quarters, but I mean that there may be certain ideas to be fulfilled by this race, certain gifts and certain modes of character to be most largely developed by them; and certain relations to be fulfilled by them towards other races—not the relation of slavery though. It may be the happiest privilege of the Cauca-

sians, when really highly developed, to lead their dark-hued brethren to the arts and wisdom fitted for them. That may be one of their especial works in the great human family. Look everywhere how creation is developed by the complex interweaving of various gifts, natures and attainments. In states, where what we call civilization has long made its appearance, it seems hard, very hard, that for generations the lower class should have been so little mentally developed; yet from that stock of unwrought mind has often come the supply of faculty which has enriched the greatest minds; and so, perhaps, the species may make greater gain in this way than had a more equable development taken place all over society. In the end, too, more human beings may thus be made more of. There is the same thing probably in the intercommunication of nations, which may go on slowly for generations, individual nationalities having thus room to grow up, and wise purposes being effected from the human mind not being in the same state of progress all the world over. There is a similar thing again to be observed, I think, in the individual mind. Had it been our business to arrange the faculties of men, how much more level and consistent we should have made

them. Into this fierce and passionate nature we should not have put tenderness, and, strange to say, judgment: into that character, in other respects so great, how could we have permitted a fearful influx of vanity, for ever to derange and mortify its greatness. Had we the ordering of things, there would be no 'fears of the brave and follies of the wise!'—a man doing the last thing that he would deliberately wish to do, contradicting the rest of himself as much as he contradicts truth and wisdom. Yet from this confusion, deplorable as it may appear to us, the soul of man comes out informed by misery and strengthened by sharp contest.

A similar class of observations, which I need not do more than indicate the existence of, may be applied to the arrangement of soils and the peopling of countries in the physical world. And, in fine, what I mean to suggest is, that absence of cultivation does not argue radical inferiority; that the perfection of our Caucasian race, or such perfection as that most readily admits of, may not be the whole of the divine scheme respecting the inhabitants of this earth: and, moreover, that our development might lack its greatest use and ornament, if we were not led by it to take our darker brother by the hand

and show him whatever we have learnt of wisdom and of virtue.

Having shown what things the negro race are capable of, both individually and nationally, it might be thought superfluous to enter into any question respecting the origin and nature of that race. But the hasty conclusions which have been come to upon questions of this kind are at the bottom of so much intolerance, that it is amply worth while to look into them a little for ourselves. Jeremy Taylor used to say, on seeing some bad man pass by, 'there goes my wicked self,' so distinctly did that noble tolerant man appreciate the close moral relationship between himself and a very erring brother. That feeling towards another which leads one to think 'it is possible I might be such as he,' 'he is of the same kind as I am,' is a never-failing source of charity. Did we think, for instance, when we saw a black slave pass, 'there goes my ill-used self,' disgust and intolerance at his present degraded condition would give way to the deepest sympathy. Something of the unwearied tenderness which men have even for the faults of their children, their own flesh and blood as they call them, might surely extend to the misfortunes of their distant kindred. 'Am I not

'a man and a brother?' is a phrase that from ludicrous associations is wont to provoke our laughter; but there is a force in that appeal which ridicule will not do away with.

Now, in what sense are the negroes our brethren? An inquiry into the origin and character of nations requires a knowledge which few possess, of living men, of history, languages, geography, anatomy and general physiology. We must, therefore, not be surprised at many persons holding fixed opinions upon these matters, as they would upon the nicest points of divinity, with very insufficient knowledge to rely upon. Neither must we be surprised that those opinions should obey the first impressions of the senses, as all first thoughts have done. Common sense (as it is mostly interpreted) tells us that things which burn us must be hot themselves; men were thousands of years before they suspected the contrary: such common sense also tells us that there must be some essential difference between the negroes and ourselves. In answer to this opinion resulting from first impressions, I quote the following passage from the work of an eminent physiologist.

'In features, as in colour, the different races

are connected to each other by the most gentle gradations; so that, although any two extremes, when contrasted, appear strikingly different, they are joined by numerous intermediate and very slightly differing degrees; and no formation is exhibited so constantly in all the individuals of one race, as not to admit of numerous exceptions.

‘We see, indeed, an astonishing difference when we place an ugly Negro (for there are such as well as ugly Europeans) against a specimen of the Grecian ideal model; but, when we trace the intermediate gradations, the striking diversity vanishes. ‘Of the Negroes of both sexes,’ says Blumenbach, ‘whom I have attentively examined, in very considerable number, as well as in the portraits and profiles of others, and in the numerous Negro crania, which I possess or have seen, there are not two completely resembling each other in their formation: they pass, by insensible gradations, into the forms of the other races, and approach to the other varieties even in their most pleasing modifications. A creole whom I saw at Yverdun, born of parents from Congo, and brought from St. Domingo by the Chevalier Treytorrens, had a countenance, of which no part, not even the nose, and rather

strongly marked lips, were very striking, much less displeasing; the same features with an European complexion would certainly have been generally agreeable.' The testimony of Le Maire, in his journey to Senegal and Gambia, is to the same effect; and there are Negresses, except in colour, as handsome as European women. Vailant says of the Caffre women, that setting aside the prejudice which operates against their colour, many might be accounted handsome, even in an European country. The accurate Adanson confirms this statement, in his description of the Senegambians. The women are equally well made with the men. Their skin is of the finest texture, and extremely soft. The eyes are black and large: the mouth and lips small; and all the features well proportioned;—several are perfectly beautiful. They have much vivacity; and an easy air, which is very pleasing.

'The Jaloffs, according to Mungo Park, have not the protuberant lip nor flat nose of the African countenance. We have also the testimony of another traveller concerning this tribe, to the same effect: according to Moore, they have handsome features, and neither broad noses nor thick lips. Pigafetta states, that the Congo Negroes have not the thick lips of the Nubians,

and that, except in colour, they are very like the Portuguese. Dampier, in his account of Natál, describes the natives as having curled hair, but a long face, well-proportioned nose, and agreeable countenance. The six Negro crania engraved in the two first decades of Blumenbach, exhibit very clearly this diversity of character in the African race: and prove, most unequivocally, that the variety among individuals is certainly not less, but greater, than the difference between some of them and many Europeans.*

But objectors will say, 'we have always heard that there are essential differences of nature between the black and the white races, not to be got over by the above mentioned vague resemblances to Europeans in certain negroes, or even in certain tribes of negroes.' This is the very part of the case on which I hope to show that the opponents of Slavery may challenge inquiry rather than avoid it.


There is scarcely a more curious and instructive chapter in the whole history of scientific research, than that connected with the investigation of the negro nature. The first thoughts

* LAWRENCE'S *Lectures*, pp. 283, 284.

of science, like the popular theories, were all on the narrow and exclusive side of the question. There were very elaborate researches which went to prove that in the dark race there was a membrane between the outer cuticle and the cutis, which is entirely wanting in white men. Here then was a valid distinction of species. Some German anatomists, however, in their solid manner, made a more elaborate investigation into the nature of the skin, and discovered that it does not consist of continuous membranes at all, but that it is of cellular structure throughout. There are certain 'pigment cells,' as they are called, which produce the abnormal discolorations sometimes seen in white men and women, and the normal colorations in negroes. In few words, therefore, the skin barrier is broken down: there is the possibility of negrohood in the finest Caucasian integument.

Russia leather may, perhaps, be entitled to look down upon simple calf: but a white skin had better be content with its difference to the eye and not endeavour to arrogate to itself any generic difference whatever.

Again, with respect to negro hair. The epithet 'Woolly' has been applied to it from the time of Herodotus, but this is a mere metaphor.



When seen by the microscope, wool is serrated: hair is smooth and cylindrical. The hair of negroes, when subjected to careful microscopic examination, was found to be cylindrical and smooth as that of a European. The difference was only in colour and in crisping; so that no difference of species can be raised upon the wooliness of negro-hair.*

The history of the facial angle is similar to that of the black skin. Camper, the first inventor of the mode of appreciating crania by the facial angle, found in the head of the statue of Apollo an angle of 100 degrees, in the Caucasian head an angle of 80 degrees, in the negro head an angle of 70 degrees, and in one of the *Simiæ* most neighbouring to man's nature, an angle of 50 degrees.† The difference between the Caucasian and these unpleasantly similar apes being but 30 degrees, the difference between the negro and the Caucasian of 10 degrees, was a serious difference. Professor Owen, however, discovered that these calculations had been made from the crania of young apes, which had led to an entirely wrong conclusion. He found that

* PRICHARD'S *Natural History of Man*.

† Ibid. p. 112.

the facial angle of the *adult* troglodyte^{*} is only 35 degrees, of the orang 30 degrees. The difference between the Caucasian angle and the ape angle being now found to be 45 or 50 degrees, the 10 degrees of difference between the negro and the Caucasian become considerably less significant.

A similar story may be told of the progress of scientific research into the position of the great occipital foramen, the form of the pelvis and the length of the fore-arm.* In all these cases science has had upon maturer thought, to recall, or to modify, its first unfavourable impressions against the negro. Probably, in our estimation of the moral and mental capability of the race a like progress will have to be noted: charity and kindness are incidentally, as well as directly, the growth of thought and intellectual labour.

Without further fatiguing my readers by a long enumeration of physiological arguments, I will merely give them the result, as it appears to me, of what I have seen on the subject. The arguments of physiologists have gone far to prove, I think, that men are all of one species.

* PRICHARD'S *Natural History of Man*, pp. 117, 126, 129.

Some of the best authorities are agreed upon this. Where they differ is, as to the causes of the varieties of that species. Some would be inclined to attribute much to the influence of climate. Others would say that the causes ordinarily given to account for the varieties of the human species—such as climate, diet, mode of life, &c. are no causes whatever; and that the differences of organization, and of qualities which characterize the several races of our species, are ‘analogous in kind and degree to those which distinguish the breeds of the domestic animals.’* If a black man comes to a cold climate, he and his descendants do not, on that account, lose one atom of the distinguishing characteristics of their race. If an English sheep go to Jamaica, it and its offspring would, I believe, keep the heavy fleece which is supposed to be more congenial to our cold climate. The lecturer quoted above concludes that domestication has made those changes in men and animals which we call, in the former, a variety of races; in the latter, a variety of breeds. If we accept this view of the matter, what shall we say that there is in this thing, domestication, beyond

* LAWRENCE'S *Lectures*, p. 473.

change of food, climate, way of life, and the various physical circumstances which the same writer has shown in detail to have no effect in altering a race, however much they may affect an individual? I suspect the answer to be this, that only those changes in physical circumstances which have an effect upon the mind, so to speak, of the animal have an effect upon the race. This theory seems capable of reconciling the opposite facts and conclusions that have been adduced by scientific men on this subject. As long as it can be said of men or animals '*Cœlum non animum mutant*' so long the race is unaltered. But let physical or moral circumstances be so altered as to call out, or to repress, or to call out in one direction, the energies of the animal, and a change in the breed may be expected. Change of mind is the cause of change of physical structure in the race. This hypothesis need not surprise us. Every day we are becoming more enlightened as to the power of mind upon body. Formerly we were more inclined to dwell on the inverse operation. Consider the alteration of structure in the heads of individual men. Look at the head of Augustus when young; and then at it after the weight of empire had rested upon it. What a

change there is! And we may notice a similar change, I do not doubt, in the case of living men.

I do not build any important part of my argument in behalf of the negroes on this theory, or on any theory. But if we must have a theory about the origin of the varieties of race in the human species, I would rather say that they have been caused by mental operations. If negroes are a degenerate race, cultivation of mind may reclaim them; if, as is at least equally probable, they are not degenerate but different, still cultivation is necessary to develop this species to the highest, when it may take its place, though not in the same ranks, yet side by side with the Caucasian variety. Again I say these are but theories: but as our theories often interfere with our charity, it is well in this instance to see whether there may not be some theory which at least may throw no discouragement on our efforts for this hitherto ill-starred race of men.

Some people may think it very absurd to talk of mental operations as the chief means of creating the difference of races. 'What has mind to do with black and white?' they will exclaim. But darkness of skin is one of the

least important of the points of outward difference between the white and dark races. The main question is as to the difference of cerebral formation. After reading the following extract my readers will feel how little there is in mere darkness of hue.

‘Two nations of Calla or Blacks, very different in physical character and social condition from each other, are now found in the country of ancient Ethiopia; the Shankalli, or the true negro, and the Dankalli, who belong decidedly to the Circassian variety of mankind, possessing round skulls, high full foreheads; the position of the eyes rectilinear; the nose, the mouth and form of countenance being in every respect concordant with the characters assigned to that type of the human race, excepting their colour, which was a dark brown, or sometimes quite black. Their hair, which is much frizzled and worn very full, is a savage caricature of a barrister’s wig. I could perceive no other difference in features or in the form of the head between ourselves and several individuals of this people; indeed, there was often such a striking resemblance between them and some of my European acquaintances, that it was not unusual for me to distin-

guish them by bestowing the names of some of my far distant friends upon their Dankalli counterparts.*

The way in which this intelligent traveller conveys to us the facial likeness of the Dankalli to the Circassian variety is irresistibly convincing from its naturalness. He finds, on seeing more of these Dankalli, that their abilities fully justified their physiognomy: he sees reason to rate them much higher than the Arabs: and finally concludes that the Dankalli are 'the remains of a once great and powerful people.' The impression produced on this traveller goes to show how little mere colour has to do with inferiority of nature.

I shall continue to avail myself of the observations of this traveller, as they afford a good opportunity of noticing how the subject widens when carefully considered, and of seeing how rash any harsh conclusion against the capacity of the negro race would be.

After living amongst these different races of negroes, the traveller in question comes to a con-

* See JOHNSTON'S *Travels in Southern Abyssinia*, vol. i. p. 15.

clusion which, as we have seen, certain scientific men at home have also come to, in favour of 'the original unity of nations.' This is important, for there are impressions and observations which escape scientific description or indeed narrative of any kind; and if we found that all travellers were convinced that negroes were not from the same stock as ourselves, scientific men would have a much harder task to convince us of its possibility. But, to continue with this traveller's observations.

'From what I have observed myself, the Dankalli, the Shankalli, and the Bushmen are the lowest grades of the three varieties of the human race—the Arian or Circassian, the Amhara, or Negro, and the Gonga or Mongolian, all of whom have a height of civilization, and a depth of barbarism distinct from each other; and that, however the Bushman may be improved, he will only become a civilized Chinese, and that a Negro may by education be made an ancient Egyptian but would never by that alone become the enlightened Circassian that his neighbour, the Dankalli would, certainly, be made.'*

* See JOHNSTON'S *Travels in Southern Abyssinia*, vol. ii. p. 446.

This may seem to militate against his former opinion in favour of the original unity of nations. But, though they may have been originally from one stock, that does not prove that they can be brought back to such unity. Not that I see why anybody should place these abrupt stops; and I am inclined to think it probable that if we had seen only the best specimens of Chinese, Egyptian and Circassian varieties, we should, after much observation, conclude that these three varieties might all be brought by cultivation to one race—at least in the main features of intellectual and moral development. For my own part I am content, seeing how much we owe to Egypt, to leave the negroes linked to the possibility of Egyptian civilization. But, perhaps, the larger ground we leave for ourselves in this matter, the better. The opinions of Sir Charles Lyell, in reference to the ancient Mexican civilization, bear closely upon this subject, and are at once safe and charitable. Putting aside for the moment their other attainments, which were very great, he dwells upon their advance in astronomical knowledge; their calendar, for instance, at the time of the conquest being more correct than that of their conquerors, or indeed of the European community.

‘If, then,’ he says, ‘a large continent can be inhabited by hundreds of tribes, all belonging to the same race, and nearly all remaining for centuries in a state of apparently hopeless barbarism, while two or three of them make a start in their social condition, and in the arts and sciences; if these same nations when brought into contact with Europeans, relapse and retrograde until they are scarcely distinguishable in intellectual rank from the rude hunter tribes descended from a common stock; what caution ought we not to observe when speculating on the inherent capacities of any other great member of the human family. The negro, for example, may have remained stationary in all hitherto explored parts of the African continent, and may even have become more barbarous when brought within the influence of the white man, and yet may possess within his bosom the germ of a civilization as active and refined as that of the golden age of Tezcuco.’*

It has now been shown that the negroes as individuals have done worthy things; that they are capable of national development; and that


* See LYELL's *Travels in North America*, vol. ii. pp. 38, 39.

we must not lightly conclude that they are an essentially different race to ourselves. But all this is much more than there is occasion to prove for the present argument. Even if it were granted that the negro race is not capable of anything like what we call high civilization, is that a sufficient reason for the creation, or continuation, of slavery? *Will anybody contend that his state, as a slave, is the highest of which the negro is capable?* A French magistrate of St. Domingo speaking of the blacks, in 1770, uses these words: 'Il existe parmi nous une classe naturellement notre ennemie, et qui porte encore sur son front l'empreinte de l'esclavage; ce n'est que par des lois de rigueur qu'elle doit être conduite. Il est nécessaire d'appesantir sur elle le mépris et l'opprobre qui lui est dévolu en naissant. Ce n'est qu'en brisant les ressorts de leur âme qu'on pourra les conduire au bien.'*

This is open language: it is to answer such ideas (which, happily, are much less frequent now) and less monstrous modifications of them, that I have endeavoured to show that there is no race, (and that there has never been any) whom slavery becomes.

* See ADDY, vol. i. p. 345.

At the same time that we are called upon to assert the just claims of the negro race, we must look with some tenderness upon the feelings of their Anglo-American masters and neighbours. It is very well for us to ridicule, or denounce, the dislike of white men to black men. We see the latter now and then: some of us have rather a prejudice in favour of these 'images of God cut in ebony,' (which, by the way, seems to show that there is no immediate natural dislike towards the race) but if they swarmed among us we might be of a different opinion. The way to look at the matter fairly for America, is not to compare our sane state with their unsound one on this subject, but to take us both when in a state of similar prejudice. Consider the wild fear of Englishmen in Charles the Second's time lest a few Papists should burn or murder the rest of the nation. Or take another instance less remote from the American prejudices we are combating—namely, the general dislike of Englishmen to Scotchmen, when Lord Bute was minister. Of course this is not to be compared to the Anglo-American aversion to the African race. But it may serve to show how far and how deep an unreasonable prejudice against a nation may extend.



Without flinching in the least from our opinion of the nature of the prejudice in America against the blacks; holding it to be irrational, unfounded, and unchristian, still we cannot treat it as if it were an easy matter to get rid of—an evil which, by mere statement of its wrongness, could at once be put down. It pervades large portions of the American people, assuming different forms. In this state it appears as jealous dislike; in that, as contempt and fear. Under such malign influences, strange laws and cruel practices are scarcely to be wondered at. All thoughtful men must pity the white Americans with this awful question of slavery before them, threatening civil feuds and favouring foreign attack; doing hourly mischief to the character of many a slave owner; and hindering the poor free man from gaining his bread in ways which are no shame to him. It may surely be said that this is a race which has not gained anything by becoming owners of slaves.

We have, in America one of the greatest races as masters: one of those which are considered lowest, as slaves. It has been shown that neither race makes the most of itself by the relation which it holds to the other: and we

may fairly conclude with the assertion—that there are no races to which the preceding arguments against slavery do not apply.

ELLESMERE. I delight in questions about the races of men, and in getting at the different strata of nations. Human geology!

DUNSFORD. Philology is very important in these questions.

ELLESMERE. No knowledge comes amiss to them.

MILVERTON. In speaking of the character of a nation, it is impossible to say what comes from the education and laws that have acted on the people and their ancestors, and what comes from race. At any rate it is most unphilosophical to attribute all that we see in national character to one cause, and then, perhaps, having resolved that race is the cause, to talk despondingly about national improvement. I have no doubt that, before Father Mathew's triumphs, you would have heard intemperance set down as a thing belonging to the Irish race, and would have been told that the Celtic nature could not break itself of any bad habit. But human nature

is a thing to which we at least can put no limits, and which requires to be treated with unbounded hopefulness: only do not let us think that this hopefulness is for white and not for black nature.

DUNSFORD. You remember —— and —— at College. They had a good sprinkling of negro blood. Well one of them was very clever, and both of them very good fellows—gave me very little trouble, which, by the way, cannot be said of either of you.

MILVERTON. I hoped you noticed that I was very careful not to place the strength of my case upon any hypothesis about race. Not that I have any fear of investigation into that subject. On the contrary my fear is lest there should not be sufficient investigation. All knowledge tends to further humanity, enabling us to go some way in detecting the grand laws of the universe. It would seem but little less than blasphemy to me to suppose that slavery was otherwise than an invention of man which will be fully found out and reprov'd in time. Mental science tends to tolerance, physical science to active kindness and the well-being of men. We gradually find out that crime is a blunder, and cruelty a mistake.

ELLESMERE. Stop, stop; are we not getting on rather quickly to theories of perfectibility and the like?

MILVERTON. No. As long as men are men, and the earth anything like what we see at present, there will be trials enough to exercise and develope the greatest men; but surely it is not irrational to hope that the life of man may be less and less 'short, nasty, violent and brutish,' as Hobbes would say. I cannot but think that this is one of the lesser meanings of the words 'thy kingdom come.'

DUNSFORD. I quite agree with you.

MILVERTON. But I must say again, I am not bound down by theories of any kind about race. I only say that the existing state of slavery is such as to leave no just room for self-development, and is not consistent with the ineffaceable distinction between things and persons. I think that Montesquieu is thoroughly right, when he says that slavery is a one-sided institution, a thing fundamentally wrong.*

* This is the passage, I imagine, that Milverton alludes to:—'Ce qui fait que la mort d'un criminel est une chose licite, c'est que la loi qui le punit a été faite en sa faveur. Un meurtrier, par exemple, a joui de la loi qui le condamne; elle lui a conservé la vie à tous les instants: il ne peut

ELLESMERE. But advocates for slavery would say that the preservation of the negroes themselves enters into their (the advocates') view of the case, and so they recognise the personality of the slave, and take away the one-sidedness you complain of so. I do not agree with them in the least, but that is what they would say.

MILVERTON. They cannot say so, without turning their backs upon all the facts of the case. The negroes when enfranchised may not live exactly in the way that suits the fancy of these theorists, but they will live—ay, and thrive too.

ELLESMERE. You talk of the necessity of allowing human beings room for self-development—what is there allowed in that way to our free peasants?

MILVERTON. You are only trying me. Talk with a peasant: you will not find, perhaps, the exact development that comes by books; but you will often perceive that the soul of that

donc pas réclamer contre elle. Il n'en est pas de même de l'esclave; la loi de l'esclavage n'a jamais pu lui être utile; elle est dans tous les cas contre lui, sans jamais être pour lui; ce qui est contraire au principe fondamental de toutes les sociétés.'—MONTESQUIEU, *de l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. 15, chap. 2.

man has gone through considerable education. His has not been mere passive suffering, like that of an animal; but he has struggled and refrained, and gained both delights and miseries for himself. In the war of life he has been a soldier, while the other was but an animal carrying, under many blows, the camp baggage.

LUCY. I wish, Mr. Ellesmere, you would come and live for a little time in the country, and then you might learn to understand us a little.

ELLESMERE. You had better at once wish all you can against me, Miss Daylmer; and say, as the witty Duke of Buckingham did to the dog that bit him, 'I wish you were married, and went to live in the country.' Is not that a good story, Milverton? One feels how Charles the Second must have liked the Duke's society.

DUNSFORD. Do not interrupt us with your jokes, Ellesmere. I was going to say that I was greatly struck by that passage you quoted, Milverton, from some man about certain Dankalli or Shankalli who were complete likenesses in ebony of some of his friends. Imagine black Ellesmeres and Milvertons.

MILVERTON. I think I hear a black Ellesmere making an elaborate speech to a grave squatting

circle of us about the vested rights of some minors in certain scalps.

ELLESMERE. Both you and I, Milverton, are very like savages in one thing—our love of animals. And that reminds me to tell you, that I was thinking during the essay, it would not be beneath or beside your purpose to show the difference produced in the disposition of animals by treatment. Now horses, for instance,—they often see nothing but the worst society amongst men; and are shamefully treated into the bargain.

MILVERTON. Yes, it often occurs to me, in going along the streets, how few men can be trusted with the whip even for animals.

ELLESMERE. And if we were arguing about races, and had only seen ill-treated horses, how unjust would be our notion even of a horse's capacity and nature. We should think the degree of tameness and obedience which we ourselves have seen, Utopian; and as to the idea of there being in the horse what the Arab finds in it, we should pronounce that to be a wild imagination.

DUNSFORD. We have much to answer for in our treatment of animals.

MILVERTON. A great deal of it is mere igno-

rance. What we were agreed upon, as regards the physical education of children a good many essays ago, would apply to these poor animals. They want more light and air, and I should say more freedom in their stables, gentle usage, little work when young, and not to be much jerked about or to be pulled up suddenly, or to have severe bearing-reins, or to be beaten for being frightened.

ELLESMERE. The ways of wise government are almost universal in their application, from animals up to Caucasians. There is a great deal, by the way, that you say for the quadrupeds which you did not for the bipeds, and that would do for both.

I pass by the unkindness of Miss Daylmer's smiling when you talked of animals not being beaten for being frightened. I know she was thinking of my ride home from — and of my exploits with that mare.

MILVERTON. My wish to see an opportunity of self-development extends to animals. I am impatient at seeing an animal have no chance of coming to its best.

ELLESMERE. Mine does not 'extend' to animals: it begins there, I don't know whether it goes on. Benevolence you know is not my forte.

DUNSFORD. Now, Ellesmere, do not make yourself out worse than you are.

MILVERTON. Not seeing that the meaning of life is this development, is the capital blunder of men individually and one of the main defects of worldly wisdom in all times. We err in this way to a frightful extent in England. Hence the mania for 'getting on' at all cost, for doing something as they call it, not being somebody. Sir Humphry Davy, and Montesquieu before him, spoke of the climate of this country as the inevitable cause for restlessness: but that is no reason why we should depreciate repose, but rather the contrary. I do not complain, however, of this restlessness, but of the notion that all activity must move in certain grooves to be owned as successful and respectable. It all arises from the same theory, that self-development, or even the development of others, is not the end of life, but the getting or doing something which can be weighed, measured, ticketed, and in some way proved to the world. Mostly, too, it must be success for one's self to please the world.

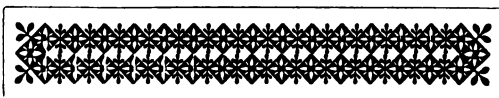
ELLESMERE. I agree with you in the main, at least as much as I ever agree with any moralizing man. You did not expect I should.

DUNSFORD. Well, we have all been very much of the same mind throughout the conversation. I think we must be right.

ELLESMERE. There are only four of us: it certainly is possible that we may all agree and be right. But I must leave you, for I have promised myself to mount that Broad Stone of Honour (Ehrenbreitstein) which is towering up behind us. How people contrive to get up these heights (which are hard enough to walk up at one's leisure) under a heavy fire, I don't know. I suppose though it is only under a heavy fire that such steep places are mounted with alacrity. Ah, mankind are strange creatures. Danger lightens toil; and the idea of being the attacking party carries men over the loftiest impediments, and is, indeed, as great a leveller as Death itself.

And now having made an aphorism such as Milverton delights in, I will walk up the hill with it as a companion, for I shall get no other. I see, you all shrink from the enterprise.





CHAPTER V.

MY readers may readily imagine, that coming to Germany at this revolutionary period, Milverton, Ellesmere and myself had many discussions upon the events that were passing around us. I shall not trouble the reader with conversations, much of which was necessarily of fleeting interest; but I shall give an outline of our general opinions, which I cannot introduce better than by the following anecdote which I once heard Milverton tell. Being in a committee upon some business in regard to which a particular danger was foreseen and great pains taken to obviate it, on the breaking up of the committee one day, a shrewd old man, versed in the affairs of the world, as he put his arm into Milverton's to walk away, quietly observed to him, ' This danger that all of us foresee so clearly will not happen. Nothing does that we foresee.'

So as regards this general state of revolution

amongst the European powers, I am very doubtful whether the evils that are now so clearly seen to be impending from it will ever come to pass; and it will probably take some turn which we none of us foresee, but which future historians will write about just as if many of us had had the exact result always in our thoughts. Milverton and Ellesmere are very much disgusted and not a little disheartened with the present state of affairs. It is natural they should be so. They have a particular dislike to the class of men who have risen into power in the course of these revolutions. Milverton comments with quiet disdain upon the wordy rulers of the day, and their issuing edicts upon the settlement of all human affairs, public and private, with a rapidity and want of thought which, as he says, would be shameful if applied to the regulations of a kennel of hounds; but feeling assured of the transitory nature of such men's power, he merely thanks God that they must soon pass away, and does not trouble himself much more about them. Ellesmere, with the fierce contempt belonging to him, vows that these men of glittering words, false axioms, inappropriate antitheses, and general inflation of mind, are among the worst specimens of human

beings that have ever come upon the earth; and that he is sure if I were to look into the Revelations I should find them under the head of some great beast. Now though I have not seen so much of the world as these younger men, I have lived through a great many more events than they have, and am therefore much more cautious in coming to any conclusion on the present aspect of affairs than they are, and, I think, am inclined to look upon it with less despondency than they do.

As a minor instance, by the way, of our difficulty of foreseeing anything, I may mention the cause of our next journey, which I am sure will be as unexpected by my readers as it was by myself. We had intended to stay some little time at Coblentz, but we left it on account of a reminiscence of tender sentiment and affection on the part of Ellesmere.

I had noticed for a day or two that he was extremely grave and silent, and this was the more remarkable in him, as he is one of those men of a dry kind of demeanour which never varies much. I mentioned this to Milverton who had also observed it, and had moreover discerned the cause. Some two or three years ago a little boy who lived with Ellesmere, and

who as Milverton says was the only creature he ever loved, died suddenly. It was his sister's son (a sister who lived in India). Milverton said that Ellesmere doated on the boy and had spoken of him more than once in these words, 'He was all that I had ever wished to be;' which Milverton said was probably the case, as the child had the bold frank ways of Ellesmere, with a tenderness quite unknown in his character—often visible in those who are to die young.

It unfortunately happened that there was a little boy about the inn where we were staying who was very like the boy that Ellesmere had lost. Milverton perceived this at once and had hoped that Ellesmere would not do so. He was mistaken, however, for Ellesmere was always looking at the child, seeking opportunities to talk to it, and though he said not a word about the matter, was evidently full of sad recollections.

I therefore expressed great desire to go on to Trèves, which my friends assented to, and we set off immediately, taking the route by land through Polch and Kaisersesch, intending to return by the Moselle. Trèves, as is well known, contains the most remarkable monuments of Roman antiquity of any town in the

north of Europe. It was this which gave it especial interest in our eyes.

We arrived in the evening and had the good fortune to see, by moonlight, as we entered, that stupendous relic of an unknown age, the 'Porta Nigra.'

Next morning we began our survey of the town, intending to find out the amphitheatre and to have our last reading there. We made our way first to Constantine's palace, at least to what remains of it, which did not lessen our respect for the massive grandeur of Roman antiquities impressed upon us the preceding evening. From thence we went to the Roman baths, and it was pleasant to think that there were some remains of that great people which might be looked upon without any drawback of pity or sorrow, genuine monuments of civilization.

Then walking onwards for about half a mile, after mounting some vine-covered hills, we came suddenly upon an excavated space of an oval shape which we knew at once to be the amphitheatre we had been looking for. After pausing a minute or two, we descended by a gentle declivity into the excavation. It was with somewhat of a cold shudder that I entered, and I noticed that Lucy turned very pale. All round

the basement of the amphitheatre was a little trench about two feet in depth into which torrents of blood must have flowed. We traced out what we supposed to have been the dens of wild beasts, the vomitories, the emperor's private entrance communicating by a long gallery with the palace, the tiers of benches for the spectators, and the steps down which the gladiators must have descended to enter the arena. It was all covered now with grass: a solitary lizard was the only live thing we saw while we were there.

As Milverton was descending the steps by which the gladiators must have entered, he exclaimed, 'Good God, with what feelings men must have walked down these steps, some of them perhaps thinking, as I do now, that some signal divine interposition might almost be expected to put an end to such enormities.'

ELLESMERE. I see the Christian Constantine had what he called Frankish games here (*Ludi Francici*) in which one thousand human beings at a time have been exposed to wild beasts.

MILVERTON. Surely these are the most colossal undertakings of wickedness that have ever been. Is there any protest, Dunsford, in any Roman author against these things? I do not

mean such a protest as we, softened and refined by Christianity, should make, but anything which should lead you to think that anybody then had the ideas which we now suppose to belong to natural religion and common humanity.

DUNSFORD. Nothing of the kind occurs to me.

MILVERTON. In contemplating these past horrors, I think of their irrevocability. That which Horace says of past joy occurs to me of past sorrow; it is as if nothing would wash it out.

‘Cras vel atrâ
Nube polum Pater occupato,
Vel sole puro: non tamen irritum,
Quodcunque retro est, efficiet; neque
Diffinget, infectumque reddet,
Quod fugiens semel hora vexit.’

Or, as Dryden says, excelling the original, I think, in expression,

‘Be fair, or foul, or rain, or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate are mine,
Not Heaven itself upon the past has power;
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.’

ELLESMERE. You must have the self-same feeling then over most of the events in history.

MILVERTON. Yes: you see, as regards the present generation you contemplate their distresses as you do those of a hero of fiction which may be abundantly made up for in the end; but

I do not very well see what comfort you are to find in considering the fate of those Franks or Thracians or Dacians who marched down these steps to be torn to pieces by wild beasts.

ELLESMERE. Let us have the essay read. It cannot be more saddening than such talk as this, and there could not be a more fit place to read it in than here where slavery reached its direst consummation.

When we had taken our seats near the spot where we conjectured the emperor must have sat, Milverton read to us the following section of his essay on slavery.

6. THAT SLAVERY CAN BE DONE AWAY.

Some way has been made in proving this proposition in the chapter on the needlessness of slavery: but more remains. If doing away slavery were now an unheard-of thing, the first experiment might be somewhat fearful, like the first experiment in sailing. 'There are many tremendous things,' says the poet, 'but nothing so tremendous as man, who goes beyond the white sea with the wintry south wind, traversing the waves howling around him.' Men have got

over these terrors ; and the sea, could it retain a keel-mark, would by this time be a beaten highway. The world, too, has grown old in the work of emancipation. There were the Greeks, having varieties of slavery amongst them, with captives taken by the spear, and men bought with gold ; with a merciful domestic slavery, rarely changed for freedom, as amongst the Athenians, and a fierce tyranny exercised over slaves chiefly bound to the soil, as amongst the Lacedæmonians. Where are the masters, where the slaves ? Then came the Romans, with armies of slaves of all nations. These nations are the masters now. Then mediæval serfdom, apparently a very rigid system. The other emancipations may be traced to violent changes ; but this serfdom gradually crumbled away.

Had a master, in any one of the above dynasties, been told that the slavery he saw was to vanish away, he would have sincerely thought that the world would come to an end then ; that, indeed, there was no living without the exact system before him. Placing ourselves in the position of such a master, or of a modern slave-owner, we may see how he will honestly believe it absurd and hopeless to change the

present state of things. What is to become, he exclaims, of the slaves, what of the masters, what of society? And, indeed, there is an impossibility about every great undertaking until it is done—or rather, until it is begun.

The modern slave-owners will say that none of these ancient cases apply, as the numerical difference between the dominant race and the slaves was never so great as it is now. But there are the British West India islands. As far as the question of population goes, emancipation would seem to have been a more difficult matter in these islands than it would be, for instance, in the American States. The population in Jamaica is short of 400,000, 'of which more than 300,000 are negroes, about 30,000 whites, and perhaps 50,000 of mixed race.'* Now turning to the first American state I happen to think of, Virginia, the total population is 1,211,405; the slaves are 469,757, not near half; and the free people of colour are 47,348.† Then take Georgia, the population is 516,823; the slaves are 217,531, again not half; and the free people of colour are 2,486.‡ As far then

* See *America and the West Indies*, by Professor LONG, G. R. PORTER, G. TUCKER, W. WITTICH, &c. p. 58.

† Ibid. p. 286.

‡ Ibid. p. 297.

as the relative numbers of slaves and free men are concerned, there appears to be no peculiar difficulty in emancipation in these states. If we extend this argument to the whole continent of America, it holds good. 'The numbers are supposed to be nearly as follow:'

Europeans and descendants of

Europeans	26,000,000
Aborigines	9,000,000
Negroes	6,000,000
Mixed races	7,000,000

But again, the advocates for the continuance of American Slavery may say, the cases are not parallel, the British West India Islands are colonies, far-off colonies; our slave states are integral parts of the empire. This fact tells both ways: it might fairly be argued that the British could venture less to diminish any restraint in dealing with a colony, than with a part of their home dominions. If the same advocate should say that the American people, the white people I mean, are less ripe for negro emancipation than the English were, that they

* See *America and the West Indies*, by PROFESSOR LONG, G. R. PORTER, G. TUCKER, W. WITTICH, &c. p. 9.

have prejudices about colours which the English are free from, that may be readily granted. It may also be at once admitted in comparing modern with ancient slavery, that emancipation is much more difficult when the races are very different in appearance. And if the same advocate proceed to say that Emancipation came on softly in old times, because it was not planned, but proceeded insensibly with the progress of other events,—that, too, must in great measure be conceded. I suspect, however, that the greatest difficulty which his clients could allege is one against the evil effects of which it is most in their power to provide, namely the much larger proportion of slave-owners to the rest of the white men in their country than in England, or in ancient States, and in the much greater political power of these slave-owners.

On the other hand, there are some advantages which the cause of emancipation will have in America. If we have committed any error in the mode of emancipation, they will be able to profit by it. The land-owners are resident: their land is more occupied than the British West Indies was at the time of Emancipation: their command of labour is likely to be greater than ours has been.

I do not, however, say that emancipation is not attended with some peculiar difficulties in modern times, and that America has not her share of them. Indeed the present state of the American people affords a great instance of the doctrine of compensation. With abundant physical resources, enjoying the results of the past labour and present leisure of a more advanced nation, it might seem that they had nothing to work out for themselves. Yet in this matter of slavery, there remains, I think, a greater work to be done by them, than the English have ever had occasion to attempt. I am not depreciating the labours of our own people. Their conduct as regards slavery is one of the best things that history has to tell of them: nor is their ardour I trust in any way deadened. Smollett says of one of his heroes, that 'if the eternal salvation of mankind could have been bought by one tenth of his possessions, he would have left the whole species in a state of reprobation, not willing to pay that price for them unless he could see in the bargain some especial advantage to his own concerns.' But in contrast to this amiable character, there are, I do believe, numbers of persons in England who, if convinced that any sacrifice of worldly goods,

would ensure the abolition of slavery in any small province, would throw down all their possessions for this end, and commence their struggle in the world again. And, as a nation, we may fairly say that we have often devoted our arms, diplomacy and finance to forward a cause, the humanity of which is its only charm in our eyes. Our efforts may at times have been misdirected—at times too we may have been enthusiastic when we should have been earnest—folly and fanaticism may have hung upon the wheels of this national effort—as on what great cause have they not? still the popular feeling on this subject in England has been so deep and sincere that even the worldly statesman has been obliged to incline to it, and the philanthropist of whatever nation cannot but have approved of it. But, as I have said before, our proceedings in the matter are but light, compared to what the Americans will have to undertake—which indeed they have begun to undertake. There has been nothing to obstruct the full action of our pity. We have had no antipathies to conquer: with us the question was not one of terror and civil discord. We do not live with coloured people; and have not been brought up from infancy to believe them an inferior race. Our

feeling for the African race, is like that which we have for the sorrows and struggles of some great man or people we read of in history. Had we lived with them, we, too, might have wronged them, like the rest. We are far enough off now to think lovingly and wisely in this matter. Many of the white Americans are not. And as their task is greater, so may be their triumph. The cause requires from them as from us prudent zeal, resolute watchfulness and masterly conduct: moreover it must have from, what happily it needed not from us, a conquest over a much-cherished pride and the reversal of an early and deeply-ingrained prejudice.

Abolition of slavery was a hard thing with us, and will be harder with the Americans; but to throw one's self lazily back and say the thing is impossible, is as weak as it is untrue. Impossibilities recede as experience advances; and men walk quietly over many well-tilled fields which, in the childhood of their thought, were deserts or morasses, peopled with fabulous animals, the ends of the earth.

The above arguments have been mainly addressed to America, where emancipation will be most difficult. Nobody doubts that France with

a slave population in her colonies under 300,000 can emancipate them without much difficulty; indeed she is steadily advancing in that direction.* In Brazil the free population is nearly equal to the slave; and in Cuba the slaves are calculated at one third of the whole population. Moreover in the dominant races of the latter countries, there is a more kindly feeling, I imagine, towards men of a dark shade of skin than there is amongst the Anglo-Saxons of North America; which feeling must give additional facility for emancipation.

As regards the negroes themselves, the possibility of their emancipation, that is, the possibility of its happening without any harm whatever to them, has been amply considered when discussing the question of their race and nature. They will work upon the motives that make other men work. The laws of supply and demand, or any other apparatus of political economy, will be found to act upon black as upon white nature. Nay even the finer humours by which we are touched will restrain or stimulate their exertion. There is an instance so curiously illustrating

* Since the above was written, France has abolished slavery in her dominions.

this, that though it is merely an individual instance, it deserves to be quoted. Two or three years ago the manager of a certain plantation in Martinique, suspecting that some of the cattle on the estate had been poisoned by the slaves, abridged them all of the usual time allowed for their private work, and even took away some of the hours commonly allotted for rest and sleep. New year's day came, a holiday always impatiently expected by the negro, but on this occasion the negroes on this estate resolved to work the whole day; they felt themselves aggrieved by the treatment they had for some time received, and they would have no holiday: not even threats availed to drive them away; they worked till night and returned the next morning as usual to their work, without any words about it.* Now, put the feeling of these negroes as

* A midi, le commandeur est venu rendre compte au gérant que les nègres travaillaient toujours, et ne voulaient pas rentrer dans leurs cases, pour y prendre un peu de repos; le gérant s'est transporté sur les lieux, leur a intimé l'ordre, à deux reprises différentes, de se retirer; ils s'y sont formellement refusés, il les a menacés d'employer la force (la gendarmerie), ils ont tous répondu: 'envoyez-la chercher,' et sans se déranger, ils ont continué à travailler jusqu'à la nuit; à la nuit, ils sont rentrés comme à l'habitude, et ce matin ils sont retournés aux champs sans mot dire.

low as it can be, say it is mere humour, the men who can work throughout their festal day for such humours, will work to feed their wives and children.

The impossibility of doing away with slavery is an impossibility for those alone who choose to make it so.

It is not necessary to my purpose to show how slavery might be done away ; but I may mention that if it were, I should certainly not pretend to put forward any simple definite plan which should claim the nature of a specific.

Men delight in neat systems and in reducing all human affairs into groups of facts, which may be dealt with according to certain fixed rules. This is at all times rather pedantic; but in dealing with dead things, such as history for instance, it is perhaps excusable, and it is possible, because you have the facts before you, if not complete, at least no longer alterable. Moreover, a great many of the irreducible facts have dropped out, and those that remain adverse to your system may be omitted.

But I suspect that if a moral remedy can be put into a system, it is small: it is then a thing which can be contained, not which forms. More-

over such a large affair as slavery, having its roots in all parts of the earth and in the mind of man, is very different from a set of historical phenomena which can be arranged and systematized to any extent.

Throughout these essays I have chiefly sought to influence opinion on the general subject of slavery, considering that such opinion must rule the ultimate issues of the matter. The crisis will come perhaps in a way that no one can foresee. You cannot manufacture crises; but you can prepare for them. As regards slavery, who can venture to foretell which way it will go? But I am persuaded there are certain considerations which if translated into practical life, will render the way, whatever it is, easier; and whether slavery is to continue, whether it is to end by political convulsion, by foreign wars, or as I hope by gradual abolition (the masters concurring) it is certainly a good thing that white men and dark men should have less and less disregard for each other: and therefore it is highly desirable that questions concerning the two races should be carefully considered, if thereby baseless prejudices may be removed.

If we look back at history, how was the slavery we are contending against first opposed?

Who was its great opponent? The Church. Such men as Antonio Montesino, Las Casas, Viera, found in their religious opinions something which would not let them be at peace with the existing system of slavery. Sincere opinion must grow into action.

I do not mean to say that there are not many rules, suggestions and plans which might be offered with regard to the abolition of slavery; but merely that it is not wise to look to any one quarter for a remedy, or to suppose that there is any one remedy which will suit so multifarious an evil.

Some of those, however, who are immediately connected with slavery, may desire precise instructions as to what they are to attempt. It appears to me that if a person who had much considered any great subject, like this of slavery, were addressed by others who should say to him, We agree with you: this is an evil: and we are ready to assist in removing it. Can you tell us what we are to do? He would reply by saying, Who are you? Tell me what function you at present have in connection with this matter; and I may then hazard an opinion as to what you might do; at any rate I can tell you what I would do if I were in your place: but be sure

that there is a great deal which you will find out better how to do in dealing with the details which are your own, than I or any one not in the same position as you can suggest. Duty can seldom be made easy—even to discover. There is no little bottle of oil which poured upon the sea of human affairs will still the waves immediately; and the man who tells you he has such a thing, is to be avoided as a vender of quack medicines. Moreover, you must not expect more from books than they can give you. Wise conduct in any matter is not like what we used to call at college 'book work,' but is a difficult problem, which book knowledge, however, may greatly assist you in working out.

Having now declared that I have no specific remedy for slavery, and moreover intimated that I do not believe in the existence of any such thing, I may add that if I had to address some of the parties in whose hands the question of dealing with slavery lies, I should speak to them in the following manner.

In addressing a British minister, I should say I have not come to any conclusion about the policy of continuing our cruisers on the coast of Africa; I am not prepared to pronounce an opinion on that difficult subject; but I am quite

certain that much good might be done by means of diplomacy with the states who are now the most concerned in slavery. I should remind him of Burke's opinion, who said 'He was convinced the true origin of the Slave Trade was not in the place it began at, but in the place of final destination.' I should tell him that by means of diplomacy he might further one of the most feasible schemes for diminishing the force of slavery; namely, by persuading the Spanish, Portuguese, and Brazilian governments, to insist upon such a registration of slaves as would show whence they came from, and tend to prevent any addition being made to the number of slaves by means of the Slave Trade. The plan of calling upon the master to prove the legitimate slavery of his slaves has been suggested in modern times by one of ourselves,* and insisted upon by the Spanish government three hundred years ago, when laudably endeavouring to legislate with humanity for the Indians. As statesmen and men of business are fond of accuracy, it will be advisable to give the very words. 'And with regard to the slaves made in war, if the pos-

* See Mr. TURNBULL's *Cuba*, c. 17, which well deserves the attention of all persons who care about the subject.

essor should not prove that the Indian, whom he has as a slave, was taken in just war, and that the orders and forms appointed by the king have been kept and fulfilled, he shall be pronounced free, although nothing can be proved by the Indian himself, so that the proof shall lie upon the owner and not upon the Indian (*de tal manera que la probanza se cargasse al poseedor, y no al Indio*) and although he shall have been branded with the iron, and the owners shall have bills of sale or other documents of title.* The introduction of such a principle as that contained in the foregoing ordinance, would no doubt be most serviceable in mitigating and restraining slavery.

To the Portuguese government our minister might address himself, not as if he were suggesting to them for the first time reasons of humanity and policy for putting down slavery, but only as improving upon and furthering the means which have already been submitted to the Queen of Portugal by her own Government.†

* HERRERA, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 8, lib. 5, cap. 5.

† 'The glory of continuing the great undertaking commenced by King John the Second, was reserved for your Majesty. The civilization of Africa, of which so many powerful nations have despaired, is more feasible to the

With the Brazilians our minister might make the carrying of this project of registration a matter of distinct treaty; and, amongst the arguments with which he might ply that government, he might suggest to them that they would do wisely to make their polity with regard to slaves different from that of the Southern States of North America, so that servile insurrection, if it ever takes place in those states, may not spread to them; and that their security with regard to their own slaves may make them more able to repel any attack.

Queen of Portugal, who holds in her hands the key of the principal gates at which it can enter, and whose authority is obeyed in various parts of that vast continent, at distances of more than two hundred leagues from the sea; and as it was possible for the former sovereigns of Portugal to open roads for civilization, a step which no other prince had ventured upon, so it will be possible to make that beneficial plant thrive and flourish in those regions.

‘As an indispensable preliminary to any measures which, for this great purpose, your Majesty in accordance with the General Cortes, may take, your Secretaries of State have the honour to propose the following project of a decree for the entire and complete abolition of the slave trade in your dominions.’
(Signed by all the Ministers.)

Foreign Office,
December 10th, 1836.

See *Portuguese Possessions in S. W. Africa*, vol. 1, p. 22, of Introduction.

If I had now to address an American planter, perhaps a more important person in the matter than any British minister, and he were to tell me that he sincerely desired to remedy the present evils of slavery, I should say to him that he might begin by improving the condition of his own slaves. Let him fix shorter times of labour for them: and provide them with good medical advice, good habitations and sufficient diet. Let him give his negroes something to dispose of in their extra-time, buying their services at 'hurrying time' by piece-work. Let him keep accounts to show that humanity answers economically. Let him introduce free labour wherever he can. If the reading and writing part of the education of negroes is jealously forbidden, at least let him have them instructed in some manual arts. Whenever you make them do anything that free men do, even if it be but to play at games, you tend to make them more civilized beings and to break through the prejudice of skin. If the planter has a seat in the Assembly of his State, he may surely introduce measures for the personal protection of the negro, who seems at present to be worse off in this respect than the Roman slave was. This planter will have great weight if his estate is known to thrive, his negroes rarely to run away,

to live longer, and to work more effectively than those of his neighbours. Gradually he might attempt bolder things. He will probably find more support than he has anticipated. In every system of things, hard and solid as it seems, there are secret doubters and dissentients. In the most Papal times, here and there were people who thought for themselves in Church matters; so in slave states, there may be several persons who if they heard doctrines about the treatment of their slaves contrary to the received practice (those doctrines being propounded by one of themselves) might give them a favourable hearing. He might venture to argue in the Assembly in favour of education for the negroes, and if so might ask his brother planters what they get now by not allowing education. Possibly as a temporary means of police it is not unwise. Still for the future what is it? The highest it aims at is the *status quo*. But is there not danger in the exact equality of knowledge and condition amongst a servile population? What any one wishing well to America would desire, would be to raise up a class in the slave states between the master and the slave. Therefore for that end it is not desirable to scout free blacks from a slave state or to check education amongst slaves.

It is hardly for me to suggest what further efforts in behalf of negro emancipation the individual planter might make in the Assembly to which I suppose him to belong; but in all that he does I would have him turn his thoughts from 'the ignorant present' and consider what are likely to be the changes in condition of the population whose welfare he is anxious for. That some change is necessary he has already agreed with me in thinking.

The present slavery in the southern states of America might end in some such state of things as that in India, where the great bulk of the people have an interest in the soil, but are bound to pay rent, and are governed by officers of the dominant race scattered here and there. True it is, that in the case of India, the government is the landlord, but there being an identity of interest amongst the individual landlords in the slave states of America makes the general body resemble a government. The objection to this scheme is the want of capital for the labourers. Still there are not wanting analogous cases where a similar difficulty has been met, as may be seen in works on the nature of rent.

I confess myself I have no expectation of the above being the course things will take; but

should rather look forward (if it is to be a peaceable transition) to that happening which has happened before in many states, namely a gradual development of classes with different occupations, purposes and powers, springing from the great and at present unformed masses of the people. In this way lies the greatest chance to secure freedom and civilization; and if the planter I am speaking to is aware of this, he will be constantly aiming at producing differences of position and education, in those under him, in order to provide the means of future security and improvement.

It is with such a view as this that I should ask him to come closer to me, that I might say in a whisper (as it might scandalize him less than if I were to say it aloud) that if I were he, I would seek to ally myself with those who had in their veins some of the blood of the race which forms so large a part of the inhabitants of the country. All wise conquerors (Romans, Normans, Spaniards) have done what they could to produce ties, not to shun them, with the subject race. I know well the objections that would be taken in the particular case here considered: but surely in those instances where such objections do not hold good, where the

individual of what is called the inferior race is manifestly not an inferior individual, and where the obstacle to intermarriage would be only one of race; then the great rule, that the dominant race would be wise in allying themselves with the subject race, applies and should prevail.

Lastly, I should beg him to keep a well-balanced mind between hoping too much from his individual efforts, and on the other hand being too easily dejected by the failure or incomplete attainment of his wishes. Let him say to himself, as I do now, It may not be given to any one man to do much in a great matter like this of slavery; but doing some little of what he can, he may feel thankful that the final issues of it are in the hands of a Power with whom 'A thousand years are but as yesterday,' and who has never denied the name of 'His children' to any portion of the human race.

After Milverton had ceased reading we were silent for a time. Knowing that he had been long employed upon this subject of slavery, and having myself been often consulted by him upon various points connected with it, I felt as though we were both losing an old friend in coming to

the conclusion of this series of essays. I breathed a silent prayer for the success of any good thought or suggestion there might be in the work. At length Ellesmere broke the silence.

ELLESMERE. You are quite right, Milverton, in not pretending to give a specific remedy for slavery: indeed it is so sensible in you not to have attempted anything of the sort, that I am quite sure you must have borrowed the idea from me (I dare say unconsciously); and if every philanthropical writer of books had a shrewd worldly man at his elbow, and listened to him occasionally, a great deal of human misery would be prevented. Be thankful that you are furnished with such a useful commodity.

LUCY. I am sure we must all be very thankful to Mr. Ellesmere, considering the follies he preserves us from: he does not suffer us to be long in his debt though, without reminding us how much we are indebted to him.

DUNSFORD. I hope we shall have some more essays from you this next summer, Milverton.

MILVERTON. I hope not. But I shall be delighted to assist in listening to anything which you, or Ellesmere, may want an audience for.

ELLESMERE. You are very kind; but don't expect any essays or discourses from me. Authorship is the last trade I should think of taking up. If nothing else remained for me, I should adopt in preference a calling which has many charms and few responsibilities. I should hire myself out as one of those men who carry advertising boards, like tabards, behind and before them; and whose only duty is to perambulate crowded thoroughfares in long line. This would be very superior to making a living by literature. I should not even wish to be the first man of these tabard-bearers, because he has to exercise his mind a good deal in making choice of the road to go. An objection occurs to me; but there is no form of human life perfectly felicitous: and that is, that I could not, in duty to my employer, lean otherwise than sideways when I wished to rest, in order that both tabards might still be seen. This however is but a trifle. If any ideas came into my head during the long walk of the day, I could put them down in the evening and publish them, if I liked, but I should not expect to live or thrive by so doing.

MILVERTON. Your jesting, Ellesmere, has a good deal of truth in it. I suspect there is an

utter fallacy in the notion that literature is better provided for, now that it has what is called the Public for a patron, than in former times, when it depended more upon individuals. The public like occasionally to hear an amusing story, and will pay for such a thing, though not exorbitantly even for it, considering what a good thing a good story is and how difficult it is to make one: but, for the most part, how utterly incompetent they are, and ever must be, to appreciate laborious research or earnest thought of any kind. I have often thought, dividing my subject after a fashion known in the House of Commons, that there are three sources of literature. Some books are written, not because the authors want to write, but because they have something on their minds to say and must say it: these books are few; and, as a general rule, neither rewards nor punishments have much influence upon their authors. Then there is a class of works which we may call spontaneous: written by genial men who see things clearly and can tell them. Reward has a great effect upon such writings: the public clamour for them; the wheels of the press do not rest; the substance is worked with less and less care and the materials become scanty; mannerism

is put on, and that which was 'meant for mankind' is given up to present partisans. Here the public is, if not too kind, at least too indiscriminate in its kindness; and it were to be wished that in some mysterious manner the coin of different people should differ in value according to the sense of the people—that the silver of the judicious reader should turn into gold, that of the foolish into copper. Even then I am afraid pecuniary criticism would be very incomplete, as the copper judgments of the many would still amount to so much more than the golden opinions of the few, that their presence or absence would not be of much importance.

ELLESMERE. A good idea, though! It would be one way of constructing a Utopia, that money should somehow or other take its value from the hand that paid it. Now, Milverton, for the third class.

MILVERTON. Oh, those are the slighter works of all kinds which are not written imperatively, or spontaneously, but as matters of business, or at any rate from humbler motives than the others. These are to be much influenced by reward. But who is to reward them judiciously? The difference between executing these works (which are very important in the education of

mankind) in a first-rate manner and in a careless manner is very great. To do even a slight thing well requires much time, attention and honesty: and to find out that it is done well, or ill, requires patience, fairness and some knowledge. Hence the honest writers of these works often find the careless public a very unkind master: and in short the sum and substance of all that I have to say upon the subject is, that literature does not hold out any safe reward; and if I were advising a person whose heart was set upon such things as reward, I should perhaps agree with Ellesmere in recommending a tabard-bearer's life, as likely to be more advantageous than a literary one. I myself should prefer sweeping a crossing; but this is a mere matter of taste. I need hardly tell you that my being more willing to be a listener than a preacher in the course of next summer, is not exactly founded upon any of these grounds which Ellesmere has staked his inclination for literature upon.

ELLESMERE. No: I dare say not. Perhaps you would like to learn something yourself. I suppose men who are always writing books become very ignorant. Besides, you live for your friends so much more when you are not writing.

If anything occurs to you, come and tell me. I should think so much more of it, if it were not to go into a book.

LUCY. How very selfish you are, Mr. Ellesmere.

DUNSFORD. You need not be alarmed, Lucy; there is but small chance of our friend here resting too much. There will always be something going on which he will be anxious to influence in some way or other, and he will take up his pen as the weapon he knows best how to use.

ELLESMERE. Then it is a hopeless case; and it will be in vain for me to point out to him the disadvantages close-following on the use of that fatal weapon. You might as well attempt to stop Don Quixote when armed cap-à-pie, on horseback, and going out to fight injurious windmills, by claiming his attention to details about the poultry-yard at home. I can understand, too, the pleasure of attempting to persuade or convince anybody about anything. I feel that myself; but then I am always paid for it.

MILVERTON. Ah, well, Ellesmere, there is one delight you cannot take away from literature—the sympathies it evokes and the friendships it

creates. By its aid, across wide seas and from the very depths of time, men stretch out their hands to one another, being brethren in soul. If to think the same of the Republic (*idem sentire de republicâ*) has always been considered a stern bond of fellowship, what must be that communion which arises from agreement on matters of deeper concern than any politics, and still more perhaps from that harmony in the lighter touches of thought, expression and feeling, which constitutes the very essence of personal friendship. With men whom we have never seen we may thus have a dear and intimate communion; and could these friends from afar enter the room, though it might be in a strange garb and speaking a strange language, we should welcome them at once as old friends, and should already think we knew many of their most familiar ways.

ELLESMERE. Airy fancies! but unanswerable, I suppose, as there is not substance enough in them to be met by an answer. May they do you all much good.

I did not like to remind Ellesmere of anything that could be painful to him, and therefore I did not say what was in my mind, of how

the resemblance of one child to another had brought back into his mind reminiscences and 'airy fancies' which yet had touched him deeply.

It was now time for us to go. We rose from the eminence where we had been sitting, and took a last long gaze at the scene before us. At my age and with my calling, I naturally look at anything I see on a journey, as if it were for the last time I should see it. Milverton's recent state of health may have suggested the same thought to him. Lucy looked with the glad eager gaze of youth. At last he turned to go away. I heard Milverton say to himself 'It will pass away as this has done; and men will only see its decrepit monuments.' I knew what he was thinking of, and joined with him in wishing fervently that what he prophesied might come to pass.

As Ellesmere and myself were obliged to be back in England by a certain time, which was near at hand, and as Milverton was still unable to travel rapidly, we left him at Trèves, and resumed our journey homewards. He entrusted me with his manuscripts, which I have edited faithfully.

I find that the *Essays and Conversations* of

this year are of greater length than the former ones: I hope, dear reader, you have not found them tiresome; and, even if you have, perhaps you will bear kindly with them, in consideration that you are not likely to be troubled in the same way for a long time again, if ever.





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